The COMMUNIST

JANUARY 1937

Results of the Elections and the People's Front

BY EARL BROWDER

SURPLUS DUPLICATE

The 56th Convention of the A. F. of L.	JACK STACHEL
The Negro People and the Elections	JAMES W. FORD
Lenin—Thirteen Years After	A. MARKOFF
The Crisis in the Socialist Party (Conclusion)	WM. Z. FOSTER
Review of the Month	A. B.
Book Review	HARRY GANNES

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The COMMUNIST

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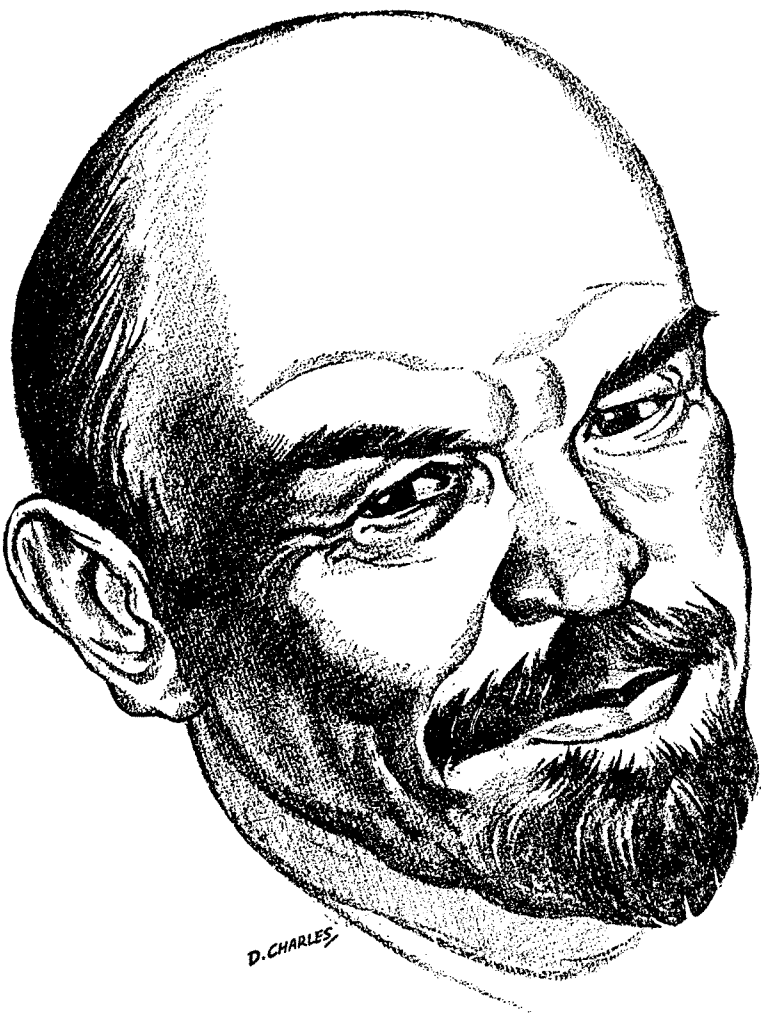

V. I. LENIN

April 2, 1870

January 21, 1924

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REVIEW OF THE MONTH

The Legacy of 1936 and the Tasks of the New Year. Make It a Year of Great Advances. Finance Capital and the Two-Party System. The Conclusions of Browder's Report. The New York Times Reveals a Position. What Is Roosevelt's Middle Course? Pressure by Independent Struggle Versus "Pressure" by Surrender. Objective Conditions and Political Perspectives. Communist Party Plenum and Program of Action. Capitalist Reaction Reorganizes for Fight. The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing. W.P.A. Is a Danger Signal. Anniversary of Lenin's Death. Follow in Footsteps of Lenin. Study Leninism and Recruit Party Members. Party Units and Independent Actions

THE New Year—1937—can be made a year of great advance and accomplishment for the forces of democracy, peace and progress in this country as well as in the rest of the world. Despite the many shortcomings and inadequacies, the struggle of the masses during the past year against the offensive of the forces working for fascism and war has created a solid basis for a serious move forward. It is our duty, as well as opportunity, to take advantage of this favorable situation. Indeed, we cannot afford to miss it.

It was in this spirit that the plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, held December 4-6 in New York City, reviewed the results of the elections and mapped out a course of action for the months to come.

Needless to say that this spirit does not arise from any such feeling as that the enemies of the people have become quiescent or that the dangers of fascism and war have become less acute. Nothing would be more disastrous than to fall under the spell of a false sense of security. A mere glance at events, at home and abroad, in the closing weeks of 1936, should be enough to dispel any such feelings.

At home, the forces of reaction are speedily and skillfully reorganizing their ranks in preparation for new attacks. The Chambers of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers, the backbone and driving force of reaction in this country, have already given clear indications that they intend to drive forward toward the same old objectives while employing for a while different tactics. And the Roosevelt Administration—true to its middle-of-the-road nature—has also given some fresh indications that it is very susceptible to this new drive and pressure of the forces of reaction. The workers and farmers on the W.P.A. have already felt the first shocks of this offensive.

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Abroad, the fascist and militarist powers—Germany, Italy and Japan—have joined forces in open agreement, collaborating actively in Spain and in the Far East (China), seeking to build up a bloc of all fascist and war-making forces against democracy and the Soviet Union on a world scale.

The legacy of 1936 is therefore one of increasing danger of fascism and war; yet also one of increasingly more favorable opportunities for a united and effective struggle against these dangers. The working class of this country, and the American people generally, can play a decisive role in these struggles. In the judgment of the Central Committee plenum of the Communist Party, the American people headed by the working class will indeed play such a decisive role by building up their own independent power on the economic and political fields, by moving in broad formations to the People's Front, to the Farmer-Labor Party.

The year 1937 should prove to be one of great advances for the reborn Farmer-Labor democracy of this country.

* * *

It was a foregone conclusion that finance capital will seek to repair and reconsolidate the greatly damaged two-party system of this country. For the capitalist class, this traditional two-party system was an unmixed blessing ever since it came into existence. It was this system that enabled the capitalist class of the United States to retain a virtual monopoly of politics. And it was due in part to this system that the capitalists were able for such a long time to keep the working class and the toiling population generally tied down to the chariot of bourgeois politics.

No wonder finance capital is so loath to part with this traditional two-party system.

The plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party reached the conclusion that this two-party system emerged from the elections seriously damaged and weakened. This was the conclusion submitted to the plenum by Comrade Browder in his report and which the plenum adopted as its own.

The New York Times reaches a different conclusion. According to this mouthpiece of finance capital, "the result achieved on November 3 can scarcely give much satisfaction to those who cherish the ambition of creating a really formidable third party". (Editorial, Dec. 13, 1936.) Whether it can or cannot, in the judgement of the *Times,* the fact is that the result of November 3 did give much satisfaction to the Farmer-Labor and progressive forces of this country. It did give much satisfaction to those "who cherish the ambition of creating" a formidable People's Front party —such a formidable party, in fact, that may from the outset emerge as a *second* party, not a third, and that will in time become the first party. The *Times* should not try to identify its own feelings in the matter with those of the Farmer-Labor forces.

Especially revealing is the reasoning of *The New York Times;* for it discloses certain political attitudes of finance capital. And the reasoning runs something like this:

". . . while the election resulted in a large net shift of votes from the Republican to

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the Democratic Party, it showed no deep dissatisfaction with the traditional two-party system—at least so long as one of these parties is led by a candidate as progressive in his views as is Mr. Roosevelt." (*Ibid.*)

No deep dissatisfaction with the traditional two-party system, says the *Times*. But the known facts tell a different story. Labor's Non-Partisan League, whose support of President Roosevelt contributed greatly towards the scope of his victory (if not to the victory itself), found it necessary to emphasize throughout the election campaign that it was *not supporting the Democratic Party*. Why? Because labor, and certainly large sections of it, was deeply dissatisfied with the Democratic Party as well as with the Republican Party.

President Roosevelt carried Minnesota but the Democratic Party had to withdraw its candidates for governor and senate in favor of the Farmer-Labor Party. In that state the Farmer-Labor Party scored the greatest victory since it came into existence. This party too had emphasized throughout the campaign that it was not supporting the Democratic Party. Why? Because the Farmer-Labor democracy of Minnesota does not want the Democratic Party.

The bulk of the Negro people voted for President Roosevelt. Will the *Times* maintain that they also voted confidence in the Democratic Party and in the two-party system?

It is possible to bring many more facts but these alone are sufficient to refute completely the assertion of the *Times* that the election results showed no deep dissatisfaction with the traditional two-party system. The situation is not simple, of course. And this was what Comrade Browder has made convincingly clear in his report to the plenum of the Central Committee. The masses voted in bulk for the candidates of the two old parties. But this tells only part of the story, the one that is so pleasing to finance capital. But there is another part and one that is more significant for the future political developments in this country. It is that the bulk of the Farmer-Labor democracy rose *to defeat reaction* in the elections and that the success was achieved largely because *new forces and movements were at work*. Forces and movements of a clear-cut Farmer - Labor - progressive character, distinct from the Democratic Party even though some of them are still within it, and moving in the direction of a People's Front party—a Farmer-Labor Party. This part of the story the *Times* cannot be expected to tell and for the simple reason that this is exactly the movement that finance capital wants to check.

No less revealing is the qualifying remark of the *Times* that its assertion (no deep dissatisfaction with the two-party system) holds good "at least so long as one of these parties is led by a candidate as progressive in his views as is Mr. Roosevelt". This reveals in part the reason for *The New York Times'* support of Roosevelt in the elections. A candidate at the head of one of the capitalist parties "as progressive" as Roosevelt, in the expectations of the *Times*, should tend to check the growth of an independent people's party. At least this is what finance capital wants a "progressive" candidate to accomplish in addition to carrying out the aims and policies of the capitalist class.

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Yet the objective situation, here and abroad, is not very favorable now, and is bound to become even less so, for the smooth working out of this sort of capitalist strategy. American labor and its allies will continue to press with increasing insistence for the realization of the people's mandate in the elections. They will do so on both the economic and political fields. Despite the emergence (uneven) of American capitalist economy from the economic crisis, there is still no evidence of the approach of a genuine boom. More important is the fact, which is beginning to be recognized universally, that "normal" capitalism in the United States must be prepared to carry with it a permanent army of unemployed of about ten million people and an agriculture in a state of chronic crisis. Barring the outbreak of war, which would change the situation radically, a new cyclical economic crisis will continue to mature in the womb of the present recovery.

All these facts and developments make for class struggle. They constitute the deep economic basis which compels the working class and its allies to organize and fight for better conditions, for a higher standard of living, for systematic resistance to the offensive of capitalist reaction.

In the face of this outlook, the question is often asked: Will President Roosevelt incline to conciliate the people or will he seek truces with reaction and the people's exploiters? Comrade Browder suggested that there was no need to speculate on that. We know President Roosevelt's class position. It is capitalist. His concern is with the preservation and strengthening of the capitalist system. He steers no "middle course" between capitalism and socialism for between these there is no middle. But he does try to find a middle course between the camp of extreme reaction and fascism, on the one hand, and the camp of democracy and progress, on the other. In its very nature, such a course is inconsistent, contradictory, shifting and highly susceptible to pressure, especially from the camp of reaction.

Up to a certain point, the point where the future hegemony of finance capital becomes involved, the concrete actions of this middle course are likely to be determined by the relative strength and militancy of the two main contending camps—the camp of progress and the camp of reaction. Whichever proves stronger and presses harder (and the camp of progress will have to press very hard) will succeed in securing more concessions. That's why Comrade Browder insisted that it is vitally important that labor and its allies seek to win the first post-election skirmish on the issue of W.P.A. reductions. Instead of speculating on whether Roosevelt will go Right or Left, organize and struggle and thus try to push him to the Left.

But, the argument is made, if Roosevelt is pressed to the Left, wouldn't that enable him to keep the masses tied down to his leadership and thus to obstruct the growth of the People's Front and the crystallization of a Farmer-Labor Party? Wouldn't that, in other words, justify the expectations of *The New York Times* that Roosevelt's "progressivism" will strengthen the two-party system and check the growth of an independent party of the people?

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In answering this question, we must guard against oversimplifying a matter which is not at all simple. When we say that Roosevelt's middle course is susceptible to pressure also from the Left (but especially from the Right), it must be clearly understood what is meant by pressure. *By this is meant organized and independent actions* by the working class and its allies, by the Farmer-Labor democracy of this country. This means strong and powerful unions, especially in the basic industries—steel, in the first instance. It means strong organization of the toiling farmers, the Negroes, the youth and women, the middle classes. Organization—and daily struggle for the immediate needs of the masses. It means further *independent political organization, program and action.* At the present time, this calls for a unified legislative program for presentation to the federal and state legislatures—a program worked out by national and state conferences of the Farmer-Labor-progressive forces and *backed* by them. It means finally the setting up of independent Farmer-Labor-progressive blocs in the legislative bodies of the country. This is what is meant today by pressure upon the middle course. This and this alone is able to exert effective pressure. Otherwise the people will be cheated of their success of Nov. 3.

If this is agreed to, then it will be clear that Roosevelt can be pressed to the Left, and full advantage taken of his middle course, *only by promoting the independent organization and action of the masses,* only by promoting the development of the People's Front and the organization of the Farmer-Labor Party.

There is, of course, another conception of "pressure". It is the one practiced by William Green at the beginning of the first Roosevelt administration in the "truces" in auto and steel, and which ended so disastrously for labor. But this is no pressure; it is surrender to the New Deal which inevitably results in the victory of capitalist reaction.

From the foregoing it does not follow that there is no danger that Roosevelt's middle course will tend to obstruct the growth of the People's Front. On the contrary. Such danger exists.

Theexpectations of *The New York Times* quite evidently rest upon the known fact that the New Deal is consciously seeking to retard the growth of the Farmer-Labor Party. Which means that we are dealing here with a contest, a race, between the Farmer-Labor forces, on the one hand, and the New Deal, on the other. That race will not be won by the Farmer-Labor forces *automatically.* But it will be won, and a Farmer-Labor Party will come into existence, by independent organization and struggle for the daily demands of the masses and by steering a conscious course toward a national Farmer-Labor Party and a People's Front government in the United States.

* * *

THE Communist Party, through its Central Committee plenum, has formulated a program of action, which is proposed to the labor movement and to the toilers generally, for the coming months. It is necessary now to bring this program to the widest masses and to help organize them for

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the demands contained in that program.

It is a program calculated to help the people realize their election mandate.

Again we must sound a note of warning. Capitalist reaction is taking no chances, nor is it quiescent. Less than one month after it had been administered a most telling blow, it has already managed to reconstitute its basic forces and is now getting ready for a new drive. In fact, it is already driving—as the workers and farmers on the W.P.A. will readily testify.

We refer to the plans of action worked out by the National Association of Manufacturers, by the Chambers of Commerce, by the bankers. Stripped of the new verbiage, which is intended to conceal the old aims, these plans seek skillfully to bolster up the rebuilding of the Republican opposition in Congress, to check the growth of unionism in the basic industries and to take the Roosevelt Administration in tow—to win with Roosevelt what they expected to win with Landon.

In the face of this—is there a danger of a Roosevelt compromise with these sharks of Big Business? Of course there is. Especially because the Farmer-Labor and progressive forces do not as yet present anywhere as near a united and consolidated front as Big Business does. What are we going to do about it?

The W.P.A. reductions are the first danger signal. The workers and farmers on the W.P.A. are showing an effective resistance but the rest of the organized labor movement is very slow in coming to their assistance. Neither William Green, nor John Lewis, both of whom had endorsed the program of the Workers' Alliance before the elections, has as yet seen fit publicly to condemn the W.P.A. reductions and to support the struggles of the W.P.A. people.

Can the trade union movement afford to see the W.P.A. workers beaten? No, it cannot. Just let Big Business and Roosevelt feel that there will be little *united* resistance to budget-balancing at the expense of the masses and to other demands of reaction, and pretty soon the unions will begin to feel directly the heavy hand of a new capitalist offensive.

In a few days, Congress will be in session. Most vital measures will come up for consideration. Big Business is on the job. But the Farmer-Labor and progressive forces are not yet on the job. While many measures are being formulated by various unions and other organizations, there is no unified people's program of legislation and no organized body to back it and fight for it.

Labor's Non-Partisan League seems to have gone to sleep. Yet this is precisely the time for it to be developing the utmost activity in unifying the forces of labor, farmers and all progressives for the serious legislative tasks.

William Green and the A. F. of L. seem to have put all their eggs in one basket—the Industrial Council headed by Major Berry. And a mighty flimsy thing this is, at least in its present make up. Labor could no doubt derive certain tangible benefits from participation in this Council and its conferences provided definite conditions were satisfied. One is—a unified legislative program of labor which

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takes full care of the immediate needs and demands of the workers, which cannot be said of the program actually adopted by the conference. Second, an independent political organization of labor and its allies to back up such a program. With these two main conditions satisfied, labor's participation in the Berry Industrial Council might be made of service to the working people. Even labor's collaboration in this Council with the representatives of the small businessmen could be made an effective means for combating the trusts and monopolies if labor itself were politically organized and independent.

As it is, what do we have? The Industrial Council has no governmental power. It is an advisory body to Roosevelt. He may and he may not heed its advice. The program adopted by the Council is not adequate or satisfactory. And even this program, vague and indefinite in most respects, has no organized backing of the political forces of labor and its allies. Under such conditions, this Council may very well turn out to be a *maneuvering instrument in the hand of the Roosevelt administration,* an instrument with which to maneuver for a compromise with Big Business, a compromise at the expense of labor.

Besides, where do the farmers come in, and the Negroes? There is no room for them on the Industrial Council. The Roosevelt Administration prefers to "handle them" separately. This may, or may not, be good politics for Roosevelt, but it surely is no good for labor. Whether the toiling farmers and Negroes are on or off the Industrial Council, labor is vitally interested in collaborating with these groups for legislative and other political purposes. Of this William Green seems to be totally oblivious. Unfortunately he is not the only labor leader suffering from this disease.

And finally the unity of the American Federation of Labor. It is of the highest significance that the organizing drive in steel is progressing rapidly and that organizing drives in auto and textile are beginning to unfold. A strong industrial union in steel, as well as in the other mass production industries, will go a long way towards halting and defeating the splitting tactics of the reactionaries. It will also create a strong basis for the advancement of the political independence of labor. But these vital ends—the unity and independence of labor on the economic and political fields—will not be an *automatic result* of the organization of the unorganized. A strong industrial union in steel will be an historic achievement. It will materially shift the relation of class forces in this country in favor of labor, in favor of progress. But in order to make it so, much more than organizing the unorganized is necessary *at the present time.* Hand in hand with the organizing drives should go an intensive educational campaign for the principles of trade union unity, efforts to reunite the A. F. of L. must be made systematically and a unification of labor and its allies for the legislative tasks must be undertaken at once.

It is wrong, in our judgement, to say that first comes organizing the unorganized and then—later (and perhaps)—will come unity efforts and independent political action. All three must go hand in hand and at

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the same time. Only thus will the organizing drive succeed *permanently*. Only thus will the reactionary splitters be halted or, if not, defeated. Only thus will labor and its allies come together and make sure that their election wishes are realized.

The program of action adopted by the Central Committee plenum of the Communist Party outlines the way in which the struggle of the people should proceed. In the industries and on the economic field generally. On the political and legislative field. And in the struggle for peace. This program meets the needs of the people.

Make it *their* program. Their program of demands and their program of action.

* * *

LENIN'S anniversary occurs this month. On January 21, the peoples of all lands and nations will commemorate the thirteenth anniversary of Lenin's death. They will fittingly commemorate the death of the greatest teacher and leader they ever had and they will rededicate themselves to the historic struggle for the realization of his teachings—the liberation of humanity from oppression, injustice, reaction and war.

Thirteen years since Lenin ceased to breathe. Thirteen fateful years. Years that have seen the victory of socialism in the Soviet Union and its growth into a mighty power for peace and progress. Years that have also seen the coming to power of bloody fascism in Germany, Hitlerism, the enemy of mankind. Years in which the guiding genius of Leninism, and of the Communist International which Lenin founded, has helped the working class and all oppressed to find the road to the united and People's Fronts. Years in which Lenin's closest collaborator and most loyal pupil—Stalin—has grown into the beloved leader of the world revolutionary movement and of the exploited and persecuted of all capitalist and imperialist countries.

A long stretch of time full of fateful events. Yet Lenin's memory shines brighter and brighter with every year that passes. The greatness and correctness of his teachings, which Stalin has done so much to further develop, are magnified and confirmed with every new turn in the development of the world and in the struggles of progressive and forward looking humanity.

We bare our heads to the bright memory of the greatest of the great. To the great and warm-hearted human. To the teacher, leader and working class revolutionist. To the founder of Leninism—the only road to the liberation of mankind.

* * *

STUDY Leninism and recruit members into the Communist Party. Without a Communist Party there is no Leninism; and without Leninism there can be no Communist Party.

Lenin's teachings have profound meaning and conquering force when used as a guide to action by a party of the working class fighting for socialism. And a party of the working class will not be truly such, and will not be fighting effectively for socialism, unless it is guided by the teachings of Lenin.

Recruit members into the Party and study Leninism.

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Lenin's teachings embrace all phases of social life. Yet the heart of them all is the teaching on the role of the Communist Party. Because without a Communist Party Lenin's teachings cannot be realized.

The last plenum of the Communist Party Central Committee has dealt with several important questions of Party building: recruiting, Party press, leading personnel, the work of Party units and sections, the mobilization of the Party for its mass campaign—for the struggle against reaction and war.

Comrades Browder and Foster, in dealing with these questions at the plenum, proceeded from Lenin's teachings on the Party and its role and applied these teachings to our present conditions and tasks. This is what Lenin and Stalin taught us to do. Master your theory. Study the peculiar and specific conditions of your work. Then apply your theory to these specific and peculiar conditions.

The concrete and specific problem facing us is how faster to increase our forces to meet the growing tasks and how better to organize our forces for the carrying out of our mass campaigns.

Following Lenin's principles, we must center our attention at once on the work of the Party units. A Communist Party is not merely a conglomeration of individuals holding the same views. The Party is a highly integrated organism, made up of organizations on the basis of democratic centralism, with each member being part of a basic organization—the unit—the foundation of the Party.

Party building therefore begins with the building and strengthening of the Party units—the shop nucleus, the street nucleus, the industrial unit, the branch. On these we must focus our attention today. And as we do so, we will find that these basic Party units do not function effectively, or with insufficient effectiveness, *as organized centers of Communist leadership in the Party's mass campaigns.* The election campaign brought to light many such weaknesses evident in all fields of Party work. Individual members of these units are doing useful and important mass work. But the units as such are rarely, and insufficiently, in the picture.

The results of this serious weakness are manifold. The Party is unable to mobilize its maximum strength for the mass struggles. This means that the masses themselves are not mobilized to maximum strength and fighting ability. Which, in turn, means a weakening of the working class front against the camp of capitalist reaction. A second result of weak Party units is that we find ourselves handicapped for the systematic carrying out of *independent* Party actions in the interests of the masses. We should, today, pay special attention to the elimination of this second result. For if we don't, here are the possible consequences:

We will fail to provide that *stimulus and pressure* which are so indispensable at the present time for the unfolding and deepening of mass struggles by existing mass organizations and united front formations.

Second, we will not be able to keep the Party's revolutionary face always before the masses, to bring forth the Party's *independent line,* not alone in resolutions but also in the

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daily struggle of the masses for their immediate demands. And, thirdly, we shall find it difficult to build the Communist Party itself into a mass party, into the recognized revolutionary vanguard of the American proletariat and its allies.

Without building live and active Party units as centers of Communist leadership in the mass struggles, we cannot build a mass Communist Party.

What is the practical conclusion? Central attention to the building of the Party units. This today means that, as soon as we have formulated our immediate political tasks and mass campaigns, we proceed (1) to mobilize the Party units for these tasks ideologically and organizationally, and (2) to mobilize them in a twofold manner: (a) for the carrying out of specific activities in mass organizations and united front formations and (b) for the simultaneous carrying out of *independent* actions *as organizations* of the Communist Party.

No blueprints are necessary or possible. Great flexibility and concreteness are necessary. But herein lies one of the keys to the further advance and revolutionization of the working class and its allies.

Certain wrong ideas will have to be overcome. Comrade Browder has shown in his report how it should be done. One of these ideas is that the spreading out of the Party's activities to the broad field of class struggle and of the People's Front movement "inevitably" necessitates a slackening of the activities of the Party units and a blurring, if not hiding, of the Party's face and of its independent line. From this wrong and opportunist premise, there appears to be a tendency to draw certain harmful practical conclusions. One is the old sectarian inclination to retire into ourselves and to revert to the mere abstract preachment of Communism. The other, in apparent contradiction to the first, tends to conclude that the present job is to build the mass movements and mass struggles and only when this has been accomplished will it be time to bring forth the Party's face and to build the Party.

Both these conclusions flow from the same opportunistic premise that mass work and Party building cannot be done at the same time, that united front mass struggles are incompatible with the simultaneous winning of the masses for the Party's independent line and for Communism. It is a premise which has nothing in common with Leninism and with the historic decisions of the Seventh World Congress explained and interpreted by Comrade Dimitroff. And despite the apparent contradiction between the two (one says: "Party—first" while the other claims: "mass work—first"), both lead to the same result—the weakening of the Communist Party as the revolutionary vanguard of the American proletariat.

We naturally reject both these conclusions. And the Central Committee Plenum unanimously adopted Comrade Browder's report which maintains:

First, that without a strong Communist Party, active in the mass movements, fighting for the united and People's Front and carrying on simultaneous independent actions in the interests of the masses, there can be no real advance and revolutionization of the American working class and its allies.

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Second, that without the Party units participating actively, and as such, in the Party's mass campaigns, with mass organizations and independently, the Party cannot build itself into a strong mass party capable of leading the struggle for the socialist revolution and socialism.

Since the Ninth Party Convention we have established ties of understanding and sympathy with hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of toilers. We have achieved this because we have proven our value and indispensibility in the building of the unions and in the economic struggles of the workers, in the struggle against reaction and for democracy and progress, in the building of the Farmer-Labor Party, in the struggle for peace, for the interests of the toiling farmers, unemployed, Negro people, youth and women. Our mass policies and activities, notably in the election campaign, have convinced wide masses that the Communist Party is needed, that "it belongs". But we have not been as successful in convincing these same masses (or considerable portions of them) that it is they who belong to the Communist Party. And why is that so? Because the masses have not seen to the same degree the value, role and importance of the Communist Party *units* to which one must belong if one belongs to the Party. Because the masses have not seen to the same degree the *independent* activities of the Party units which would make it *convincingly* necessary for a Communist sympathizer actually to join the Party (the unit). Because, finally, the masses have not seen to the same degree the revolutionary and Communist face of the Party units which it is necessary for them to see in order to become convinced that the Party's value in their struggle for immediate economic and political demands flows precisely from the fact that it is a revolutionary, a Leninist, party.

Proceeding from the teachings of our immortal leader, Lenin, we will most successfully realize the decisions of our Party's plenum by clearly realizing that:

1. To mobilize the Party for its mass campaigns means to mobilize the Party units—for united front and independent mass activities. It means building the basic units as true centers of Communist Party leadership among the masses.

2. In all the daily struggles of the masses for better conditions, to keep clearly before them the Party's revolutionary face and independent political line.

Forward to the realization of the plenum's decisions.

A.B.

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THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTIONS AND THE PEOPLE'S FRONT

BY EARL BROWDER

Two features today typify the world situation and give point to all of the life and death issues facing the people of all lands. One is the situation in Spain, where the concentrated forces of world fascism wage their desperate and bloody war of extermination against democracy, against an embattled people heroically laying down their lives to defend the principles of self-government and progress. The other feature is the Congress of Soviets which has just had presented to it the new Stalinist Constitution representing the high mark of human progress throughout all history. We see Soviet democracy reaching into the daily life of 170,000,000 people, firmly butressed in a socialist economy which for the first time translates the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness into terms of the guaranteed right to work, to education and to leisure for every citizen.

The world is divided more openly and consciously than at any previous time into two camps, with the prospect of a new world war more immediate and menacing than would ever have been thought possible before without general hostilities. This is universally recognized. Our reactionary capitalist newspapers are explaining to us that this is the division of the world between communism and fascism, and they call for a new camp, presumably to be composed of the Americas, opposed to the two sides that divide Europe and the other continents. But this slogan that the issue is communism or fascism, varied at times to socialism or fascism, or Marxism or fascism, hides the most essential fact. The fascist nations rally to their active support the most reactionary circles within all the non-fascist countries and prepare civil war therein, while the Soviet Union, the land of socialism, led by the Communist Party, rallies all the anti-fascist, peace-loving nations and all progressive circles in all lands to the defense of democracy, progress and peace.

All countries outside of the Soviet Union are fields of bitter struggle for dominance between the forces of democracy and fascism. In Germany, Italy, Japan and their satellites, reaction and fascism are ascendant and carry on civil war against the people through the government. They are rapidly extending their domestic

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aggression across frontiers to other lands: Italy in Ethiopia, Japan in China, Germany and Italy in Spain. They are driving toward a world war for imperialist conquest and against the democratic rights of the peoples of the world and their national independence.

In France the rise of the People's Front halted fascism at home and threw French governmental influence on the side of peace and progress, although the serious hesitations of the Blum government became constantly more dangerous. French fascism was stopped but not routed and threatens to make a new offensive.

In Britain a reactionary administration, playing with sympathy to the fascist offensive, is able to continue such policies through democratic forms, despite the anti-fascist tendencies of the British population, due to the ineptness of the Labor Party leadership and its failure to fight for a consistent peace policy. The first decisive struggles to determine the predominant position in the international line-up are now maturing. I must mention that great item of international news which every day occupies from five to ten pages in the daily newspapers, the constitutional crisis in Great Britain. I hope you will pardon me if I do not go into the details of the love affairs of King Edward. But it is of the utmost importance when we see the greatest empire of the world, on the territories of which the sun never sets, shaken by the affairs of the heart of two people. British imperialism boasted of its solidity, its unshakableness and indeed had impressed all of us with the absence after long years of crisis of serious inner disturbances. British imperialism until a few years ago boasted that it did not even need to arm its police to keep its starving workers in perfect order. But today the British Empire is shaken by the love affair of its King. Of course, all of this romantic nonsense which the masses are fed covers something very real, very significant and very dangerous for the world situation. All of this is the development to the rapidly approaching struggles in Britain to decide which side England is going to be on in the next world war. And the fact that the struggle around the King has become so sharp and shaken the whole empire should prove to us, if it doesn't to those who read the news stories, that this affair is not about the domestic arrangements of Edward VIII, but about the disposition of guns and ships and airplanes, and the destiny of the peoples of the British Empire.

Now let us turn to the conference of the American republics now going on in Buenos Aires. It shows how sharply the whole world now feels the coming war and begins to take up an attitude toward the basic issues. The speech made by Secretary of State Hull, at the Inter-American Peace Conference, is of great significance. It was a contribution to the mobilization of the anti-fascist forces of the world in the struggle against war, for the maintenance of peace, not only in the Americas, but everywhere. With the fascists on the offensive everywhere, with these fascist forces growing bolder and becoming very arrogant in some of the South American republics represented in Buenos Aires, it is no small thing when the bourgeois spokesman for the United States

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government makes an appeal to the peoples of the world to organize people's peace movements to control their governments.

On the first plank of Secretary Hull we can declare our complete agreement. And we can welcome such a call which will be heard and listened to by the peoples of every country where they are not absolutely cut off by fascist dictatorship. Even there it will penetrate and find a response. There are, of course, points in Secretary Hull's program where we will have to register some differences of opinion as when he puts forward the plank of American neutrality as the key to peace. We know the falseness of neutrality. We know how it has played into the hands of the war-makers in America and throughout the world. But even on this point we have to note some progress in the direction of a real peace policy in Hull's speech. The neutrality that he put forward is not the simple neutrality of the past, of withdrawal from world affairs, of isolation. It begins to have a new content, not clearly defined as yet, but containing within it the possibilities of developments toward an active peace policy for America which will strengthen the peace forces throughout the world.

The program as laid down by Secretary Hull is very tentative and is not yet crystallized. As it becomes crystallized, we will of course find many points in which we have to distinguish our position very sharply. But the main significance of this speech is that America is more and more emerging as the greatest power of the capitalist world on the side of peace, and against the fascist war-makers, and that in this position there is already an appeal to the masses of the people for organized support, not only governmental support, but mass support in every country to the struggle for peace.

The tremendous world significance of the present struggle in Spain arises from its position as focus point for the whole world struggle. Fascism had counted Spain as one of its conquests. The democratic victory of the establishment of a Spanish Republic was thought to have been smashed and subverted from within due to the disunity of the democratic forces. But the call for the People's Front to defeat fascism issued by the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International was greeted with mass response in Spain, second only, if not equal, to that in France. The fascists were overwhelmingly defeated in the Spanish elections of February, 1936. The People's Front was victorious and established itself in control of the government. Fascism had lost Spain. It launched the murderous uprising against Spanish democracy in July, with the inspiration and support of Hitler and Mussolini, as a desperate attempt to recover its lost position. The international fascist intervention in Spain is the first point of the general world war being prepared by fascism against democracy everywhere.

The chief task of the day for all of progressive humanity is the support of Spanish democracy. In Spain, while we are meeting, we see new victories for the People's Front forces and at the same time we get the news of the landing of large-scale armies of invasion from Germany and Italy. I don't think I have to emphasize to this meeting the significance of this,

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what it means for our tasks in carrying out the campaign in support of Spain, everywhere in America. We cannot permit the invasion of fascist forces in Spain to throw the tide of battle against Spanish democracy. More than ever now, we must bring international assistance for the Spanish people in every form, and America is one of the places that has to stand in the front ranks of this solidarity action for Spain.

There are a few Americans who are now in the fighting lines in and around Madrid and in the air forces there, and in the machine shops that are keeping the machinery of war going for the People's Front. Many more are eager to go and they should be encouraged and assisted. We must understand that in the struggle for support of Spain we can now reach out into the ranks of every circle in America which has any firm democratic convictions. There are many people ready to fight for democracy and to go to Spain today. As Communists we urge them to do so and fight for the cause of all humanity.

It is on this world stage, the setting of which is characterized chiefly by Spain, with the Soviet Union completing its own democratic achievements while leading the world forces in support of Spanish democracy, with the fascist governments ever more openly subsidizing and supporting fascist intervention, with all the world forced to align itself on one side or the other openly or tacitly; it is on this world stage that we must evaluate the recently concluded elections and must mark out the next steps in the struggle for democracy, progress and peace in the United States.

I. The Defeat of Reaction in the November Elections

At the Ninth Convention of our Party in June, in charting our course for the elections, we established that, first, the Republican Party represented nationally the point of concentration of the most reactionary forces in America, moving toward fascism and war. The task was to defeat this threat at all costs. Secondly, Roosevelt, heading the Democratic Party, stood for a middle of the road course. The support of the organized labor and progressive movement went to Roosevelt, as the practical alternative to aggressive reaction. It became our task to teach this progressive and labor movement not to rely upon Roosevelt, to secure independent political organization and action, to win all possible concessions from Roosevelt while using this campaign to prepare its future complete independence in a Farmer-Labor Party. Thirdly, the Communist Party, necessarily conducting an independent campaign, was the most active, loyal and clear-headed leader of the whole camp of labor, progress and peace. Its special task, while influencing the broadest masses and the practical electoral decisions, was to maintain its role independent of the capitalist parties, and extend widely its roots of sympathetic connection with the masses of workers, farmers and lower middle classes and their organizations.

These three objectives represent a specific American application of the strategy of the People's Front, formulated on a world scale at the Seventh World Congress. You will recall that we in America also helped prepare

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that Congress decision by our movement for the Labor Party in 1935. I want to recall to you a statement of Comrade Dimitroff in his report to the Seventh World Congress, where he said:

"And what would the success of fascism in the United States entail? For the toiling masses it would, of course, entail the unrestrained strengthening of the regime of exploitation and the destruction of the working class movement. And what would be the international significance of this success of fascism? As we know, the United States is not Hungary, or Finland, or Bulgaria, or Latvia. The success of fascism in the United States would change the whole international situation quite materially."

Comrade Dimitroff, after thus evaluating what fascism in the United States would mean to the entire world, in another place went on to expose the source of incipient fascism in the United States:

"One must be indeed a confirmed addict of the use of hackneyed schemes not to see that the most reactionary circles of American finance capital, which are attacking Roosevelt, represent first and foremost the very force which is stimulating and organizing the fascist movement in the United States. Not to see the beginnings of real fascism in the United States behind the hypocritical outpouring of these circles 'in defense of the democratic rights of the American citizen' is tantamount to misleading the working class in the struggle against its worst enemy."

This warning was directed against such people as the leaders of the Socialist Party and their policies. They failed to realize the significance of this fascist danger, and, hence, in the elections, found themselves cut off from the masses and headed for a harmful sectarian isolation.

We learned in this election campaign what deep truth there was in these statements by Comrade Dimitroff. After the Seventh Congress we said that the far-reaching and world-shaping consequences in the People's Front strategy would become clear only as they unfolded in the life of the people of the world. We called for a continued and sustained study of the Seventh Congress decisions and their consequences. The victories of the People's Front in France and Spain confirmed this estimate. Now we must add that the elections in the United States in their own and different way also confirmed the correctness of the Seventh Congress decisions.

The best possible confirmation of the correctness of a strategy is its successful execution, and the realization of the expected results. To what degree did the masses of the people achieve the objectives we set for the election?

The first objective was the defeat of Landon. This was accomplished to a degree far surpassing all expectations. There was a crushing rebuke to the Republican Party such as no major party had experienced in generations. It must be clear that the more overwhelming the defeat of the Landon camp, the more did we achieve our political objective which was more than merely keeping Landon out of office. It was to discredit and drive out of public life all who stood on such a platform before the American people. This aim we shared with the largest number of people, which proved to be the great majority of the population. Without exaggerating our role in bringing about this result, we can safely say that the weight of each individual Communist in the struggle was far higher, manifold than that

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of the members of any other political group in America.

The second objective was to make the campaign and the re-election of Roosevelt serve also to prepare and strengthen the forces of the Farmer-Labor Party and the People's Front. This aim was achieved in varying degree in the various parts of the country, with some advance almost everywhere. We Communists, by our policy and activity, helped bring about these advances in every case, in many instances in a most significant degree. Outstanding examples of these are: (a) the smashing victory of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party not only over the Republicans, but also over the Democrats where their candidates stayed in the race; (b) the victory of the Wisconsin Progressive Party, and, more important, the strengthened position within it of the Farmer-Labor Progressive Association, with the appearance of Communists and definite Left wingers among the elected officials; (c) the electoral successes of the Washington Commonwealth Federation, a People's Front movement just emerging out of the Democratic Party, moving toward a Farmer-Labor Party; (d) the united political action movement in California which united the E.P.I.C. movement with labor and Left-wing organizations, and which maintained the positions in state legislature and Congress originally won in 1934; (e) the American Labor Party in New York which, notwithstanding serious weaknesses and shortcomings, advanced the People's Front and gathered more than one-quarter million votes under its own banner, giving its support to Roosevelt not through the Democratic Party; (f) Labor's Non-Partisan League, although only a beginning and very timid step forward to independent political action, represented distinct progress over the traditional A. F. of L. attitude, and was a step in the direction of a Farmer-Labor Party. In these examples and in other mass movements of perhaps less significance we find some indication of the general advance that was achieved in the election campaign toward building the foundation of a People's Front.

We have no reason to exaggerate these achievements, beyond their true proportions. They are limited and full of weaknesses. Yet they are of enormous importance as representative of those movements toward the People's Front, the further development of which gives the only hope of preventing reaction and fascism from seizing America. The problem of further extending, developing and uniting this movement on a national scale is the central problem of the day.

On the third objective, that of building the Party, we should note that even by the narrowest standard of measurement, the vote for the Communist ticket, which circumstances this year removed from all direct relation to the scope of our influence, shows considerable growth except on the Presidential ticket, which will probably show a slight decline. An example of this is the growth of the vote in New York City to 65,000 for the general ticket, topping the Socialist vote of 60,000 for the first time. That there was a distinct advance of Communist Party influence has been generally admitted.

We must come to the conclusion, therefore, that life itself, and the re-

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sults of the struggle, have given proof of the full correctness of our Party's strategy, a strategy which brought us fully into the main stream of American political life and made our small Party a significant factor not merely for ourselves but for the whole country.

Our Party's significant role was made possible by our understanding of the deep class currents in American politics. When we speak of our Party's achievements, we by no means conceive of them as exploits of wonder-workers who sucked these results out of their own thumbs. Our Party's role was important because we knew the currents among the masses. We placed ourselves in a position, not merely to ride these currents, but to cooperate with them and increasingly to guide them. It was the movement of the masses which was the force that changed the whole face of American politics.

Let us try to get a closer idea of the nature of the change in the political structure of the parties that took place, making the Republican and Democratic Parties something different from what they were before. For generations the two-party system of American capitalism was based upon a regionalism that roughly corresponded to basic economic groups. These were the industrial banking North, the cotton-tobacco South, the wheat-dairy-livestock-mining West. The party struggle was largely between the bourgeoisie of these three regions for their special interests. They brought forward such issues in addition as were considered necessary to undermine the mass following of the rival groups, or to whip up their own supporters to greater enthusiasm. With Republicans as the party of Northern capitalism, and Democrats that of the special agrarianism of the South, the basic problem of their conflict was always which of them would win the allegiance of the West. This regionalism was accentuated by the federal system of governmental structure, with its 48 sovereign states. The basic class antagonisms rarely broke through this superstructure to find any clear expression in the parties and issues in national politics.

If this traditional structure of the two-party system had remained intact, there is little doubt that the *Literary Digest* straw ballot would have been as prophetic in 1936 as it had been in four previous Presidential elections. The *Literary Digest* came to disaster because it overlooked one little fact: the dominant line of political groupings was no longer the vertical one of regionalism, but the horizontal one of class stratification. Because their sample votes were taken overwhelmingly among the upper classes—automobile owners and telephone subscribers—they reflected the general current of these classes toward Landon and the Republicans, but overlooked the contrary current among the poorer strata in the opposite direction.

Class groupings came forward as the decisive factor in the 1936 elections, sweeping over and submerging the old regional traditions and interests. That is one of the chief reasons for Roosevelt's sweeping majority. The speed with which this took place, its extent which left out only Maine and Vermont (the stagnant extreme Northeast), its volume with a majority of 11,000,000—all these indicate that this

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change is not accidental or temporary, but a permanent new direction of American political life.

This regrouping on class lines came to the fore on the initiative taken by the big monopolists, in the organization of the notorious Liberty League, and the subsequent mobilization of the American Bankers' Association, the United States Chamber of Commerce, the National Manufacturers' Association, and all similar bodies under the direct control of Wall Street. Their policy was directed toward shelving Roosevelt and his policies in favor of the Republican candidate—any Republican, they thought, could be elected by them. They were even agreed, as their reactionary literary servant, Mencken, expressed it, that a Chinaman could beat Roosevelt with all that money-power behind him. But the masses, although stirring with discontent against Roosevelt's policies, took fright at this unprecedented concentration of all their most pitiless exploiters, and rallied around Roosevelt to defeat Wall Street. When the fascist Hearst added his voice to the hymn of hate the issue became quite definite for the masses. Roosevelt's victory was won for him in the first place by the character of his enemies. Their campaign of hatred was his greatest political asset, as he himself recognized in his Madison Square Garden speech.

Equally significant was the negative influence of the daily newspapers in the elections. The big majority of them actively supported Landon, estimates running from 65 per cent to 85 per cent. The remainder, with few exceptions, were lukewarm in their support and full of reservations. The more the newspapers turned against Roosevelt, the more the masses turned toward him. They had learned that newspapers represented and spoke for their worst enemies and oppressors.

The unprecedented "Red scare" that was staged against Roosevelt also strengthened the sentiment of the masses in his favor. Of course, no one could seriously credit the cries of "Communist", "revolution", "Moscow", "red flag", and so on, that filled the air for weeks. When for a full week the newspapers debated whether it was really true that the Communists asked their followers to vote for Roosevelt, they succeeded in doing more than diverting a few hundred thousand votes away from us, in his direction. They also convinced millions, already alarmed, that his typical Hitler-Hearst trick stamped the dominant features of the Landon camp as fascist. Thus the great mass of anti-fascist sentiment was directed to Roosevelt. The defeat of almost every Red-baiting candidate in the elections was one of its major features. Red-baiters lost out no matter what group they operated within. Another typical trait of the Landon campaign which confirmed mass opinion of its fascist direction was its demagogic and contradictory promises of all things to all men.

Roosevelt also gathered to his support the mass peace sentiments prevalent among the people. Without putting forward any definite peace program, he could still shine in comparison with Landon, whose jingoist tendencies were emphasized by the support of the munitions lords and warmongers generally for his candidacy.

Another boomerang for Landon was the Republican attack upon the

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weaknesses of the Social Security Act, and the attempt to enter into competition with Roosevelt in promises. The result was to press Roosevelt into making his Madison Square Garden speech with his pledge for shorter hours, higher wages, an end to sweatshops and child labor, collective bargaining through trade unions, and his slogan that "for all these things we have only just begun to fight". These promises aroused the enthusiasm and support of the workers, where Roosevelt's record during his first term had left them cold or indifferent. Again the Roosevelt majority was swelled and given even more the character of a class line-up, of a crusade against Wall Street and reaction.

The election results discredited and drove from public life, at least temporarily, the fascist radio priest, Father Coughlin. For a time the Union Party looked formidable, when it promised to unite the agrarian following of Lemke, the old-age pension movement of Dr. Townsend, the followers of the radio priest, Father Coughlin, and the remnants of the Huey Long Share-the-Wealth movement under Rev. Gerald K. Smith. For a short while it succeeded in penetrating state-wide Farmer-Labor Parties in Iowa and Michigan, and even seriously threatened to influence the successful Farmer-Labor Party in Minnesota.

Only the determined and relentless campaign of exposure and opposition, led and organized in the first place by the Communists, smashed the influence of Lemke and Coughlin in one after another of their strongholds and finally brought them to an inglorious collapse, completely isolating them from the Farmer-Labor movement. They received only a fraction of their expected vote. The Union Party fully justified our judgment of it, as the vanguard for the reactionary campaign, laying the ground for more reactionary slogans, as when Father Coughlin raised the issue of bullets to overthrow a possible "dictatorship" of Roosevelt. Its collapse was of the same general political significance as that of the Republican Party, of which it was an auxiliary.

Negative proof of the correctness of the course of the Communist Party is given by the debacle of the Socialist Party. The Socialist Party took a diametrically opposite course to our line on every tactic. Demoralized by the bankruptcy of opportunist Social-Democracy in Europe, the Socialist Party still rejected the proposals of the Communist Party for a united front, came out in principle against the People's Front in America and advocated its liquidation in France and Spain. It tried to find a new course, by submitting to the poisonous influence of Trotskyism and by amalgamating with the Trotskyites. The Socialist Party opposed and tried to disrupt the Farmer-Labor Parties in the various states, it denounced Labor's Non-Partisan League, it declared that the only issue of importance was the immediate transition to socialism, but for this Left-sounding slogan gave a most reformist interpretation. By this course the Socialist Party played into the hands of its Right-wing elements and came to an unprincipled split with its local organizations, which had somewhat of a mass base in Connecticut and Pennsylvania; it split with the New York Old Guard which had trade

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union connections; and only saved a split in Wisconsin by making that state an "exception" which resulted in the practical liquidation of the Socialist Party into the Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation. Its course brought about the public resignation from the Socialist Party of many members prominent in trade union work and the withdrawal of others from practical politics, both of Right and Left tendencies. Its whole campaign was a frantic grasping for votes for itself at all costs, but it failed of this aim more completely than ever in its history. The total vote will be only 20 per cent of that of four years ago and less than half of the Socialist Party vote in 1900, when it made its first national campaign.

The Socialist Party is, as a result of its sectarian course, its opportunist and inept campaign, now in a deep crisis, with its lower organizations ravaged by the bitter factional struggle for complete control being waged by the Trotskyites. We must offer to all sincere Socialists our sympathetic help in solving their difficult problems.

II. What Follows After the Roosevelt Victory

Now, let us pass on to a consideration of what follows after the Roosevelt victory. The balloting on November 3 could be called "the great repudiation". The large majority of people were first of all voting against Hearst, against the Liberty League, against Wall Street, against Landon, against reaction, fascism and jingoism. That is the first and most important significance of the elections. It was a smashing defeat for reaction. But, though defeated, the forces of reaction were not routed. They are reforming their lines for new attacks, preparing new methods to gain the same ends they sought in the election. Forced to drop their plans to challenge the validity of the election, which they clearly had in mind in expectation of a close vote, the reactionaries, faced with a tremendous majority for Roosevelt, suddenly turned an about face and began to make love to Roosevelt. Hearst, who the day before election denounced him in the same terms as he does the Communists, against whom he incites lynch law, suddenly found in Roosevelt the qualities of an Andrew Jackson of the twentieth century.

If Roosevelt wants support from them, the reactionaries tell the world, he can get all he wants, for a "sane" policy that will curb the "wild men" who got into Congress in the landslide, in far too large numbers for reactionary comfort. The defeated reactionaries hoped to recoup their fortunes through the Democratic Right wing, through influencing Roosevelt, through splitting the Democratic Party, and through the Supreme Court.

The Communist Party sees in the overwhelming defeat of reaction in the elections a great opportunity for the forces of the People's Front to move forward, for labor to achieve some of its demands, for all of the oppressed to win improvements in their situation. But this cannot be done if we sit and wait for someone to bring things to us on a platter. It will not happen if the masses rely upon Roosevelt. Progress can only come if we use the opportunity for organiza-

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tion and struggle on a broader and more determined line than ever before.

Evidence that millions of workers understand this point is to be seen in the rising movement in various industries, in marine, steel, clothing, textile and others. These workers knew that now is the favorable time to gain demands, but that without organization and struggle nothing will happen. There is a mounting mood of confidence and readiness to struggle. This is the mood that must be roused, stimulated and organized to drive the whole movement forward for the People's Front.

Of course, the Democratic Party leaders and Roosevelt want nothing of the kind. They want everyone to be quiet and wait for whatever the new Congress will bring them. The Democratic Party wants to restore good relations with its extreme Right wing and with the reactionaries generally and still continue to absorb all Farmer-Labor Party sentiment and prevent its crystallization.

The A. F. of L. Executive Council, instead of leading the labor movement forward, pulls back and condemns even such hesitant efforts as Labor's Non-Partisan League and the C.I.O.'s steel drive. It is ready to split the whole labor movement rather than permit progress.

The C.I.O. unions, while moving forward for industrial organization, are marking time politically, waiting for new developments instead of helping bring them about. The statement of Labor's Non-Partisan League after the elections sounded only the call to be alert and to be ready for a possible realignment in 1940, but there was not a word about helping create this realignment. We can by no means agree with this passive attitude but must point out that it is an obstacle to progress.

The employing class is naturally aware of the mounting spirit for struggle of the masses and they are trying to head it off. That is the significance of the large number of voluntary pay increases that have been announced since the elections.

Only the organization and struggle of the masses, independent of capitalist parties and politicians, will realize their demands and expectations, through Congress and outside of Congress, and prepare the way for greater concessions later on.

True, the masses have "great expectations", as *The New York Times* expressed it, as a result of the defeat of reaction. They believed in the promises made to them. They expect higher wages and lower hours, with protection of the right of collective bargaining and trade union organization. They expect adequate relief and public works to care for the eleven million unemployed; and they are in the mood for sharp struggle to achieve these. They expect the improvement of the old-age pensions and social security law, and their extension to the whole population. They expect the wiping out of sweatshops and child labor. The Negroes expect some of the equality that Ickes talked to them about. The farmers expect more relief from their burdens. The young people expect further help from the government. The masses expect a curb to be placed on the usurped powers of the Supreme Court. They expect the United States to take an active part

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in preserving peace in the world. They expect greater civil liberties.

All of these great expectations constitute the mandate given to Roosevelt by the overwhelming majority of his 27,000,000 supporters. It is these great expectations which must be transformed into the moving force for the creation of the People's Front and the independent struggle and organization to realize these things.

The crushing defeat of the Republicans hastened the disintegration of the old two-party system. It brought closer the growing split of the Democratic Party, the party which united progressive and reactionary elements in the election, elements which cannot long continue in the same party. It strengthened all the progressive tendencies among the voting population. All these things improve and broaden the prospects for the building of the People's Front. We can say that these prospects are much better than ever before.

But at the same time, while improving and broadening the prospects for a national Farmer-Labor Party, this very progress brings about a temporary delay in the organizational unity of all these forces in a definite national organization. Now more than ever there is a fear among many progressives of prematurely forming such a party and thereby narrowing it down, leaving behind and outside serious forces which can be brought in a little later or in a different form.

We want to hasten the formation of a national Farmer-Labor Party as much as possible. It was the absence of such a party in the last elections which seriously held back the growth of labor's power. Even the national application of the tactic of the American Labor Party in New York would have been a great advance. The closest thing we got to a national concentration of the Farmer-Labor Party forces was the valuable but very limited Chicago Conference of May 30. This produced no effective organization but only a platform. The Chicago platform alone, however, by its stimulating effect on all local movements, proved the tremendous role that can and will be played by a really effective national united front of all the progressive movements and organizations. That is what we have in mind when we call for a national Farmer-Labor Party.

We must soberly estimate, however, the moods and trends among the broad progressive ranks. We must find the way to unite the movements already outside of and independent of the Democratic Party and Progressive Republicans together with those that are still maturing within the old parties, and not yet ready for full independence. This means that we must conceive of the People's Front on a broader scale than merely the existing Farmer-Labor Party organizations. We must conceive of it on a scale that will unite the forces in the Farmer-Labor Party and other progressives together with those forces crystallized in some form or other but not yet independent of the old parties.

Our experience in Washington and California confirms the correctness of this judgment. There is not the slightest doubt that we were correct in establishing the united front of these movements which were not yet independent of the Democratic Party. The struggle to realize the mandate of the elections will still further broaden and

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crystallize those progressive movements. We cannot, like Norman Thomas, wash our hands of these growing movements and demand that they spring forth overnight fully grown and mature, before we will recognize and work with them. We must be ready to help them through birth pangs and nurture them through all the difficulties of infancy.

There cannot be a blueprint which will answer by formula how the People's Front is to develop uniformly throughout the country. We must study the real forces at work among the people and their relations concretely, and find a way acceptable to these progressive forces which will unite them on a state scale, and later nationally. This broader unity will have to, for a time, at least, include in most places forces outside and inside of the two old parties. This is a necessity at present for the development of the Farmer-Labor Party on a broad mass basis.

More than ever now, we must emphasize that in the People's Front, and in the existing Farmer-Labor Parties which already realize in part the People's Front, we are not trying to obtain a camouflage for the Socialist and Communist Parties. In the People's Front we must at all costs include non-socialist progressives who will for a longer or shorter time be the overwhelming majority. Our aim in the People's Front is to organize the majority of the people in the shortest possible time, against the worst reactionaries and exploiters, and get the maximum possible control of the government in the hands of this progressive majority. And we must say that the results of the election showed, more than we ever saw before, the possibility of achieving this.

Roosevelt and his close supporters, of course, want to create the impression that the people already have achieved this goal through his re-election. This illusion if not fought against can become an obstacle to the further growth of the People's Front. It will be fully dispersed only in the course of struggle, in independent struggle on the economic and political field to realize the great expectations of the workers; first of all in the industries, in the fight for wages, hours and unionization, and, second, in the legislative assemblies of the states and the national congress in the fight for social and labor legislation.

We do not need to waste time, as some people do, in speculations as to whether Roosevelt will turn Right or Left, although our prediction of a Right turn by Roosevelt as expressed before election is being realized in the administration's relief policy today. From past experience we know that his course will be determined in its major aspects entirely by the course of the road. Roosevelt always tries to find the middle of the road. If the road turns right he turns right. If the road turns left he will turn left. The road of national life will be determined not by Roosevelt's mind or tendency, but by the relationship of forces, by the independent struggle of the masses in the economic and political fields. A strong and successful movement to organize the mass production industries will change the course of government and of Roosevelt to the Left more than all the persuasive arguments in the world.

Likewise, we need not be afraid that

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the workers and farmers will win too much through Roosevelt and will thus dull their appetite for more and make them conservative. We must encourage the masses to win everything possible through the election victory of Roosevelt, showing them that this can only be done through organization and struggle, and through political independence from Roosevelt. We can be quite sure that every gain under these conditions will only sharpen their appetite for more, while having increased their knowledge and their power to gain more.

Neither do we need to speculate on the question as to whether on a national scale the People's Front will be realized only in the form of a Farmer-Labor Party, or through its combination with other forms of organization and struggle of the masses. It is sufficient at this moment to take note of the necessity in many states to work for a time at least also through broader and less definitely crystallized forms than the Farmer-Labor Party. What will finally come out on a national scale will to a large degree be determined by the relation of forces within the Roosevelt following, between reactionary and progressive trends and forces. A split in that following is sure to come, but its form on a national scale is still impossible to predict with certainty. In this struggle we will also participate, and we will have many difficult, complicated, and dangerous problems to solve in organizing and influencing the masses in the struggles that take place within the Democratic Party and in some progressive sections of the Republican Party.

Just a word about the economic prospects after the election. We do not need to take time for any extended economic analysis. It is clear that production and economic activity in almost every industry are definitely continuing upward. Production is approaching pre-crisis levels. But the most important fact is that this still leaves a mass of unemployed in America, variously estimated from nine to fourteen million. This, together with the forces always preparing a new collapse, guarantees that this so-called prosperity will not reach even that relative mass of people that it has in previous periods, and that it will be even shorter in duration, independent of the changes that may be brought about by world political developments such as world war.

The election results strengthened the fight for the unity of the working class and of the trade union movement. This is of central importance, for without the firm leadership and hegemony of the working class which can be exercised only through its unity, the broader People's Front cannot be realized.

The fight for working class unity which for us still means the historic task of the organization of the tens of millions of the unorganized workers, and especially the workers in the basic and mass production industries, today confronts us with the special and immediate task of fighting against the spreading of the division in the organized labor movement, of fighting for the reunification of the American Federation of Labor.

Our Party has throughout the whole of this critical period in the trade union movement thrown its full weight in the fight to maintain the unity of the American Federation of

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Labor and against the splitting policies of the reactionary leaders of the Executive Council. Now the Fifty-sixth Convention of the A. F. of L., by its endorsement of the suspensions, has taken a step which increases the threat of a long time split in the trade union movement. We shall redouble our efforts in the fight for trade union unity, for the unity of the American Federation of Labor. The statement of the Central Committee condemning the split, issued immediately after the Tampa convention had confirmed the suspension of the C.I.O. unions, furnishes the guide for our tasks in this fight.

We must examine in detail the application of this statement to the specific situation and find very carefully the correct line in the complicated problems that will exist in the many industries and in many trade unions. Again we have to say that there is no formula which automatically gives us an answer to these problems. Only careful study of the concrete situation will enable us to find the correct, the most effective, answer in the fight for unity.

But let it be clearly understood that we are not going to be fooled by empty talk about unity. We will always expose, as we have in the past, those who play with the word unity and use it to cover up their reactionary and splitting policies and tactics, There are those who, in the name of unity, would surrender to the reactionaries and compromise or abandon the basic struggle to unite the workers in steel, auto, rubber, chemical, and other mass production industries. Against this false cry of unity, which William Green used so demagogically to demand surrender to reaction at the Tampa convention, we must unite all progressives in firm solidarity. Practical compromises to adjust the particular claims of particular craft unions to this basic program are, of course, allowable, and no one would think of rejecting them in principle beforehand. But such practical compromises are possible only when the reactionary Executive Council has opened the door for them, by abandoning its demand for unconditional surrender of the progressives in their fight for working class unity.

Recently Comrade Dimitroff, in his article on Spain, recalled to our memory the clear, firm words of Lenin on unity which are of great value in connection with this problem to the American trade union movement:

> "The workers really need unity. And the thing that must be understood above all else is that apart from the workers themselves, no one will 'give' them unity, no one is able to help their unity. Unity must not be 'promised'— this will be an empty boast, self-deception. Unity must not be 'made' out of 'agreement' between little groups of intellectuals—this is an error of the saddest, most naive and ignorant type. Unity must be won, and only by the workers themselves. The conscious workers themselves are capable of achieving this—by stubborn and insistent work.
>
> "Nothing is easier than to write the word 'unity' in letters a yard high, to promise unity, to 'proclaim' ourselves as adherents of unity. But, in reality, unity can only be advanced by work and the organization of the progressive workers, of all conscious workers. . . .
>
> "This is not so easy. It requires work, insistence, the rallying together of all conscious workers. But without work, the unity of the workers is out of the question."

So Lenin spoke some twenty years ago about unity, on the eve of the

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World War. And it is in this spirit that we today fight for working class unity, for the unity of the American Federation of Labor. The fight for genuine trade union unity is a fight for the triumph within the labor movement of the principles enunciated and supported in action by the Committee for Industrial Organization. The establishment of this principle is an absolute necessity for the further growth, for the very existence, finally, of the trade union movement. It is a necessary condition for the preservation of democracy in the United States, for the salvation of our country from reaction, fascism and war. That is why we must say, without the slightest equivocation, that the struggle to realize the principles of the C.I.O. is the first demand upon every progressive as well as every revolutionary worker. It is the struggle for the unity of the working class.

There can be no real working class unity so long as some 25,000,000 workers, of whom some ten million are in the mass production industries, are unorganized. This does not in the least mean that we underestimate the importance and significance of the four million organized workers, the most decisive sections of which are in the unions affiliated to the C.I.O. and in the independent railroad brotherhoods.

Can you imagine if we succeeded in the future, and that is our aim, to help organize the entire working class, its decisive sections, in genuine industrial unions, under real progressive labor leadership, how that would change the entire picture of the class relations within the country? What impetus that would give to the independent role of the working class in shaping, formulating and influencing the policies and life of all the people in our great country? That certainly would be a guarantee that the mandate to Roosevelt in the elections would be fulfilled.

III. Accomplishments and Shortcomings of the Communist Party

We have already evaluated the main accomplishments of the Party in the previous section of the report. We have seen how our Party strategy proved correct by the results, and by the immensely improved position of the Party in relation to all the progressive forces in the country. We are in conflict only with those forces which are holding back the movement; we have increasingly close cooperation with all forces helping to drive the labor movement forward to new strength and achievements; above all we have deepened and broadened our ties with the masses.

Some comrades are still influenced by the idea that the Party vote is the only correct measure of our achievements. To the degree that they are influenced by this idea they are somewhat pessimistic because our vote did not show any great jump forward. These comrades look upon our refusal to go into head-on collision with the progressive labor movement, in sharp competition for votes, like Norman Thomas did, as a sacrifice necessary to assure that Landon would not be elected. Therefore, they ask us why we did not change our position in the last days before election, when it was becoming clear that Roosevelt would be elected. They wonder why we did not swing over to the Thomas tactic

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of grabbing the utmost possible votes for ourselves at the last minute (even though this failed so signally to win votes for Thomas).

To pose such a question reveals a shallow understanding of our whole strategy and a wrong evaluation of our accomplishments. Let us throw light on this question from another angle. Suppose that our proposals last summer for a national Farmer-Labor Party had been adopted by the progressive movement. Then we would have withdrawn our national ticket entirely. But we would have made an equally energetic campaign without getting any separate Communist Party vote at all as a result. Would our doubting comrades still have kept their eyes fixed on the C.P. vote, this time zero, and feared that we had disappeared entirely from the political scene? Of course not. Clearly, it would have been recognized as a much greater victory. However, the urgent need for a united front, which everyone felt, was realized in another and less satisfactory way under such circumstances that we could not fight against it—the united front of the labor and progressive forces around Roosevelt.

We foresaw, before the campaign opened, that our separate vote would register only our irreducible minimum and not our maximum influence. This was inherent in the situation and our strategy. There is nothing to weep about. We do not have to explain away our vote by special local circumstances or special weaknesses on our part. Weaknesses there were aplenty in our campaign but they must not be sought in this question of the relation of our influence and our vote. There is no direct relation between them at all. Not to understand this is to have a very narrow understanding of the whole strategy of the People's Front, which is not a mere election tactic but a strategy for a whole period.

Where our strategy was realized in its most satisfactory form—as in Minnesota—we had no state ticket at all, but were among the most effective campaigners for the Farmer-Labor ticket. Does that mean that we were weakened in that state? On the contrary, we made the greatest advance of Communist influence among the masses, precisely there. Equally significant were our advances in Wisconsin which again can in no wise be measured by our separate vote. Even in the very unsatisfactory American Labor Party in New York, with its crude organization from the top alone, there were greater advances of our influence than would have accompanied a situation where the America Labor Party was absent, even though that had meant a higher Communist Party vote. We made greater advances with the lower vote in New York with the American Labor Party in the field than we could have made with a higher vote and the American Labor Party not in existence.

Then, too, we should point out one possible development which was not realized but which might have occurred if the progressive leaders had taken only a part of our advice. Suppose these leaders and their organizations had adopted our proposal for a national Farmer-Labor Party convention, including the Socialists and the Communists. Suppose that this convention had come together and

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formed a national Farmer-Labor Party with all of us in it, and then decided to place Roosevelt at the head of the ticket nationally, like the American Labor Party did in New York, but followed it up with state Farmer-Labor Party tickets wherever possible. Under such circumstances would the Socialist Party and the Communist Party have accepted the discipline of such a broad national united front of all progressives? Would we have refrained from putting forward our own independent tickets and supported the Farmer-Labor Party ticket even with Roosevelt at the head? I venture to say that under such conditions we would almost surely have done so. The united People's Front and the cause of Socialism as well would have been advanced much more than by what actually happened in the election campaign.

One of the greatest accomplishments of our Party in this campaign was that it began to learn how, even with small forces, to find its road in the midst of the most complicated political situation—we drove in the center of a national political storm toward a definite goal, without ever losing sight of it, and without allowing our forces to be broken up, dispersed or demoralized, but rather gaining strength and clarity out of it all. This ability is the hall mark of Bolshevism and to the degree that our Party demonstrated this ability, we can say that we are in the process of becoming a real Bolshevik Party.

Can any one, even our worst enemies, deny that the Communist Party played an important role in the campaign; that millions of people thought that what the Communist Party had to say was of serious importance, that millions were influenced in their thinking and their actions by the Communist Party? No one can deny this undisputed fact. Can any one say that we lost our heads at any moment, that we hesitated, or doubted at any point, that our strategical or tactical line was ever blurred or unclear or had to be changed? It is possible to differ with us but it is not possible to say that. Everyone recognized that the Communist Party was an exceptionally effective striking force precisely because of its conviction and clarity, its drive and unity. That is another of the hall marks of Bolshevism.

Can anyone deny that in this campaign the Communist Party broke through and smashed the legend of our enemies that our Party is something foreign, imported from abroad, not organically a part of the American political scene? No one can deny that we thoroughly established our Party as an American Party, that our slogan —"Communism is 20th Century Americanism"—registered deeply with the American people. This was a great achievement. This is also a sign of Bolshevism.

Can anyone deny that in this campaign the Communist Party smashed the conspiracy to outlaw it, to rouse a pogrom spirit in America against the Communists, to drive us out of politics? We forced our Party on the ballot in states that had passed laws designed especially to keep it off. Where, as in Illinois, we were kept off the ballot it was by arbitrary violation of the letter and spirit of the election laws, unreasonable as they were, or as in Florida, where the law now even

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excludes the Republican Party. When in Terre Haute and Tampa, and against Comrade Ford in Durham and Toledo, mob action was resorted to, this did not rouse the country against us, as the reactionaries hoped, but we turned the attacks into the most effective boomerang whereby we rallied even large sections of the capitalist press to speak in our defense, and won new sympathy from millions who were formerly indifferent to us. Here also is a great achievement.

Turning to the more technical aspects of the campaign, one can list among our achievements the effective use, for the first time, of the radio. We reached millions with our message nationally, and in many districts also on a local scale. This must by all means be followed up and made a permanent part of our technique.

Our campaign literature was upon a higher political level, more effective and was distributed in far greater quantities than ever before in the history of our Party. While much more could have been done with this task and literature distribution was seriously neglected in many places, yet this still remains one of the strong points of the campaign.

The political rallies organized in the most important cities on a national plan were taken up most seriously by the district organizers and as a rule were models of effective political and organizational work, in which thousands of people participated in a responsible way. Unfortunately these models were not energetically followed everywhere in handling the thousands of lesser meetings, which left much to be desired.

Contrast the growth of the influence of our Party with the catastrophic decline of the Socialist Party, its growing inner crisis and one will at once get the different results of two different policies. The S.P. policy flowed from reformism, sectarianism, influenced by counter-revolutionary Trotskyism; our policy was built on Leninism correctly applied to the present situation.

Let us now turn attention to some of the most serious weaknesses and shortcomings of the campaign. First of all we must speak of the entirely unsatisfactory state of the recruitment of new members. Our membership grew but there was not an increase in tempo to keep pace with our heightened activity and broadened contacts. Our units, sections and districts were not able to keep this task in the center of their attention. It constantly slipped into the background and was forgotten in favor of the more exciting and spectacular sides of the campaign. Concentrated attention to important industries and localities was also too often forgotten and the Party slipped back too much into the old diffused general approach against which we have struggled for years.

This means that our lower units showed a tendency to drift and become the playthings of spontaneous development instead of taking charge of this development and directing it to a conscious goal. That such a thing could happen proves that the units and sections did not conduct planned work, that they were not the organizational center which directed the activities of the membership toward predetermined goals. This is precisely the condition that we find upon direct examination of the work of the units

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and sections. Their work remained too much a matter of routine handed down from above. Their initiative was low, their inner life unattractive and uninteresting; as a result they did not become the centers of radiating energy, the dynamos of the Party. The decisive centers of Party activity down below were too much divorced from the units and sections, and did not find in them their basis and support. In fact, they forgot the central task of making the units and sections concentration points and radiating media of all phases of the campaign.

Closely connected with this and flowing out of it is the unsatisfactory quality of much of the local and neighborhood campaigning. There was mechanical repetition of the speeches and formulations of the national spokesmen and national literature, without any effort at independent local application and tying up of national issues with concrete local problems. Further, when local concrete applications were attempted there was too often a lack of care and precision, a sloppiness and carelessness and sometimes even a vulgarization of our policies which was very harmful. Such things could pass uncorrected only because the units and sections were not alert, and were not checking up on the conduct of the campaign, not conducting it as a collective undertaking but as isolated individual efforts. The struggle for a higher quality in all our work from top to bottom is the only answer to these problems.

In facing and solving the complicated problems of intensive work among the masses, and simultaneously building and strengthening the Party organizations and their role, a clear understanding of the characteristic Bolshevik approach and conception of the Party is required. A large part of our membership is new and unschooled in these problems. It requires constant educational work to transform these members into conscious Bolsheviks—a task still most seriously neglected. Another part of the membership, longer in the Party, has become fixed in old careless bad habits, which have not been weeded out. Some of the local organizations have become careless and loose in their approach to Party organization and its regular functioning on the false grounds that this was what we meant when we warned against overloading the members with work beyond their powers.

Out of a loose and careless approach to the organizational building of the Party, there arise all sorts of political weaknesses and even deviations. There arise again examples of the old discredited theories of "mass work first" at the expense of neglecting the Party, and then the opposite and equally wrong theories of "Party work first" at the expense of neglecting the mass work.

Lenin taught us that true revolutionists never for a moment allow such artificial separation of "Party" and "mass". Mass work without the simultaneous growth and strengthening of the Party is in danger of opportunist liquidation, while Party work divorced from direct and immediate connection with the masses will tend in the direction of sectarian barrenness and degeneration. The constant connection and interrelation between Party and mass work must become

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the dominant feature of our Party life, in units, sections and districts, if our Party is to exert its maximum influence in directing the millions of American workers and their allies onto the road of the People's Front and eventually to socialism.

That these problems still exist for us is proven by the weakness and shortcomings of the election campaign. It will be necessary to pay critical attention to all these features of our Party life, making use of our election experiences to drive out all looseness and carelessness, and to replace these characteristics by those of responsibility and vigilance throughout the Party.

Summing up this examination of the Party's role in the election campaign, we can say that despite serious weaknesses and shortcomings which must receive sustained and detailed attention at this Central Committee meeting and after, the Party followed a correct and consistent line which improved its position in every respect. Our Party demonstrated a growing political maturity and emerged as an important force in national life. We gained the sympathetic attention of millions and influenced them, and our Party now stands in an excellent situation to face the next tasks, much greater tasks, toward which we must now direct our attention.

IV. The Tasks of the Party and the Mass Struggle Ahead

I divide this section into four groups of problems. First, I shall deal with the problems and tasks of the coming economic struggles of the working class and of building its organizations. That includes the persistent fight for the unity of the working class, for the unity of the trade union movement. Secondly, I shall deal with the next steps in building the People's Front. Thirdly, I shall deal with the tasks in the fight for peace, how to strengthen the existing peace movements, and how to organize the tremendous peace sentiments of the American people. Fourthly, I shall take up the problem of how better to connect ourselves with the economic and political activities of the people, and, through a better quality of Communist work, facilitate the building and strengthening of our Party.

To begin with, I shall take up the great marine strike which occupies the center of the picture today. This should be some indication to us of what is going to come in many other districts of the country. If one compares this strike with the great strike in the same industry in 1934, one can see on what a higher plane it is this year—how much stronger are the forces of the marine workers, how much more widespread is their influence spreading to the other sections of the labor movement and how they are gaining international support from the French and Mexican longshoremen. That is why Mr. Ryan was in a hurry to adopt a solidarity strike with the employers as a means of combatting the solidarity actions of the workers.

This great battle in marine should become the first point of concentration of all the energies of the Party. Successful results from this struggle seem quite possible, quite within the grasp of the workers today, especially if we rally all possible support to

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them. They will have an enormous influence in stimulating and hastening the growth of similar movements that are maturing in many other industries all over the country.

We must not expect the developing strike movement just to come in one great sweep in the next few weeks and spread out all over the country. It will have its periods, its ups and downs, but we can expect some real results in the near future, especially if the reactionary employers carry through their present intention of halting the forward move of labor by open repression. The climax of the present development looks as though it will come about the time when the miners' agreement expires and when the problems in steel will have come to a head.

Those of us whose memories about former struggles are still fresh can remember the lessons of the past strike struggles. Most of the things we wrote in the last four years still hold good, and we should study them carefully.

The steel drive lagged definitely during the period of the election campaign. Since the elections, it is picking up and gathering headway again, but I think that even with the rising development of the steel campaign, it is necessary to warn against any relaxation of the vigilance and persistence of the workers in organizing a greater drive in steel.

It is necessary also to say that there are still some districts of our Party which have not yet taken up the steel campaign with sufficient seriousness, even though there are important sections of the industry in their territory. We cannot really consider ourselves a serious, revolutionary Party, the vanguard of the working class, if we are not the most energetic and constructive organizers in steel. In any place where the work of the Party among steel workers is being neglected, it shows that the Communists in these territories are keeping the Party on a low political level and preventing the Party from becoming the leading force among the decisive sections of the working class. These comrades are keeping the Party from performing its necessary duties for the working class. This warning holds true for the comrades who work in other basic industrial areas, in textiles, auto, rubber. Other basic industries will soon have, if they do not already have, the problem of an organization campaign.

In textile we see great struggles developing that promise much greater achievements than those of 1934. The situation today is such, what with the mood of the textile workers, that if all progressives work right and take the job seriously, the workers can make many gains. That is why it is essential for the Communists to work harder in textile, to give better guidance and stand out as the most courageous workers.

In auto we see new struggles and what appears to be a new move of organization which is already talking in terms of new thousands of union members. More important, all of this organizing now begins to appear in the center of the automobile industry and not at its periphery. Due to the concentration of the auto industry in a few centers, with half a million workers, it is a special problem in a few districts and first of all for the Michigan district, which must persistently work among the auto workers and

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transmit the experiences of these struggles to the working class elsewhere in the country. But just as marine, steel and textile are national questions for us, so is auto. By the very nature of the auto industry and the concentration of capital there, where the bosses represent the national money power of the country, it is necessary to have the national power of the workers mobilized around auto, too.

The next field that must be especially mentioned is agriculture. The activities there are tremendously encouraging, showing great possibilities. Unfortunately, there is a negative side to the picture, showing in many districts our neglect of this question. We can't afford anywhere to neglect the agricultural workers. We can't afford to have gaps in our line in this field. Where work has been done and progress made, it has already been sufficient to prove that it can be done everywhere where serious and intelligent attention is given to it.

The agricultural workers everywhere can play as big a role in building the labor movement and in giving it a progressive tendency as they played in the A. F. of L. convention. They were one of the most significant groups of representatives present. The same role can be played in the whole labor movement and in every locality if it is given correct leadership and daily attention. We are going to demand it of every district. I believe that the Central Committee will agree with this emphasis.

Now about some details in the struggle for trade union unity and the relations between the C.I.O. and the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. We must emphasize what we said in the statement of the Central Committee, what we have repeated for the past nine months: It is necessary to fight to preserve unity below, in the city councils, in the state federations, to prevent the threat of a split from being carried through, to put up organized resistance to the plans of the splitters. Every progressive must emphasize that international unions must not be split by this division. We think that it would be harmful if any unions were divided, one section going to the C.I.O., the other to the A. F. of L. We believe that it is advisable for the existing unions to act as a body. We ourselves want to do everything we can to align them with the C.I.O., but under no conditions do we carry that fight on in such a way as to make a split in that union. Of course, we will do everything to prevent the reactionaries from splitting off any section of any union.

It is necessary to emphasize the need of keeping the C.I.O. forces together. We fight against any tendencies among the weak-kneed leaders of some of these unions to abandon the fight and surrender to the reactionary policies of the Executive Council. We emphasize at every point that under no circumstances will we allow any weakening of the work of building the progressive movement inside the reactionary unions, those still dominated by the reactionaries. On the contrary, there must be more systematic work, especially in such organizations as the Carpenters' Union which in A. F. of L. conventions is voted from the vest pocket of Wm. Hutcheson, but which down below has numerous possibilities of progressive organization.

We will face and solve in practical

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work the special questions that will arise with the creation of new unions in unorganized sections of industry, as to where the workers shall be taken. For example, in the possible organization of some sections of heavy machinery, we will have the problem of determining whether these new unions go into the machinists' or into some of the other unions, whether it be the Amalgamated Association, or what.

Generally, we have been clear on this last question. We refused to use our forces to carry sections of newly organized workers away from the jurisdictional claims of the Machinists Union over into some of the industrial unions, where there was a fear that this would intensify rivalries and sharpen the split. We will have to keep that consideration carefully in mind in facing such problems under the new circumstances that are arising. We must understand that under all conditions we are driving towards creating the foundations, in the unions controlled by the reactionaries, for the struggle for unity with the industrial unions. If we are to organize strong progressive forces, we have to give them a political basis on which they can fight inside the old unions. We must not allow the policy of head-on collision between unions to be developed in jurisdictional struggles where they can be avoided.

The conditions on which unity can be achieved are the withdrawal of the suspensions, the guarantee of the continuous carrying through of the organization of the mass production industries into industrial unions, the restoration of those democratic rights of unions further infringed upon by the Executive Council in Tampa, such as the actions taken against the federal unions, and rescinding the dictatorial powers of the Executive Council which came out of these last decisions.

Let us turn to the unemployed and W.P.A. workers and their organizations. The unemployed struggles are coming to the fore again as a key question in the whole political life of the country. The efforts now being made to squeeze down W.P.A., and relief expenditures from Washington, a typical and expected course of the middle-of-the-roaders of the Roosevelt administration, are tests to see how much starvation the workers will stand without fighting. We have seen in the last years in the relief policy directed from Washington, a system whereby the administration regulates the flow of relief funds according to the scale of mass struggles that is put up in the various localities. They are constantly shifting their policies to test out how much resistance and struggle will be put up in any particular place. If they get by without any struggle, that proves to them they were correct in reducing expenditures. If they have a sharp fight, if there are collisions with the police and demonstrations and struggles around relief offices, that proves to them they were wrong, and they begin to raise expenditures up a little bit again. It is impossible to impress this sort of mentality with any kind of language except that of organization and struggle.

In the period before the elections there was created a little bit of the feeling of security among the unemployed because things were rather stable for a time; but the change after the elections was so sharp that even

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the most enthusiastic supporter of the Roosevelt administration, the *New York Post,* had to write a sharp editorial asking, "Who won the elections anyway?" They said that if a person had gone to sleep just before election day and then awakened in New York last week, he would have thought Landon won the elections, because of relief cuts that were being carried through. Of course, Landon didn't win, and as a result we have greater possibilities of changing the situation, greater possibilities if we organize and fight. The unemployed question for a time has been pushed into the background of our work in most places. The question of the unemployed must come forward because we are faced with a critical moment in the whole problem of relief and work for the unemployed. How we will work in directing the mobilization of the unemployed and bringing the solidarity of the progressive movement around their actions may be decisive in determining a lot of other questions not only of the unemployed. The whole course of the administration in Washington may hinge on how this first post-election issue goes, on whether the forces of progress or reaction have the last word to say.

The gains of unity in the Workers' Alliance have been great, but we have not fully exploited these gains and the possibilities of gains. Now the situation calls for greater attention to unemployed issues and unemployed struggles and to the unemployed organizations, more help and more guidance. These will encourage the next steps in building the People's Front.

This brings us to a problem which will probably play a most important role in the next immediate months, namely, the development of a legislative program for the new Congress. Around this legislative program must be built up a progressive bloc in Congress. And around these progressive forces a mass movement of support must be built up in the country. This is the first step to the next stage in building the Farmer-Labor Party.

It is clear what the nature of such a program will be. There will be concrete bills, as far as possible worked out under our influence, making concrete proposals for carrying through necessary labor and social legislation. The closest working together with all possible progressive allies in the furtherance of such bills is an essential prerequisite for their success.

Where our point of view does not receive the broadest support of the progressive forces, we will have to make, in addition to putting forward bills of our formulation, such compromises as will be necessary to get a working relationship with the other progressives who have different ideas from us. While frankly declaring our differences with them, we sometimes will have to support unsatisfactory bills. In other cases, as in the question of social security, there will be the problem of how to fight most effectively for the Workers' Bill and at the same time be prepared to unite with these circles of progressives who will want to improve and amend the Social Security Bill. We will have to join in all movements to amend and improve the existing Social Security Act by increasing its coverage and requiring the employers to foot the entire cost. But we will not give up the fight for

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the Workers' Bill, because the Roosevelt security act is built upon such unsound principles that, even if amended, it can never be converted into an adequate social security system.

We should also raise the question of a national conference of social and labor legislation, to be held in Washington during the sessions of Congress. This should not be decided by us as something we are going out to carry through. Rather, there should be a general get-together of all progressive groupings in a national legislative conference, bringing mass pressure to bear upon Congress in the early months of its session.

We should raise with our progressive friends the discussion of possible measures to democratize election rights and practices in the United States, thereby advancing civil liberties generally. There should be federal regulation of all elections involving federal officials which is now entirely a state affair with resulting chaos. This is an obstacle to developing a national fight for civil rights.

Following the same approach, there should be work done on a state scale. We already have experiences showing the tremendous value of state conferences on social and labor legislation. This must certainly be organized in every state where there are any forces that can be called together on any serious scale. Progressive groups in all state legislatures should also be formed. All this, let me emphasize again, is laying the groundwork for the Farmer-Labor Party and the People's Front. Only on the basis of such work can organizational measures have any serious meaning at all.

We want to give special attention to consolidating and extending the existing local and state Farmer-Labor Parties. There should be a warning word that in most cases these still have too narrow a base to be sufficient for extensive work. There should be no pretense of Farmer-Labor Parties where a mass basis does not exist. It is much better not to discredit the name of the Farmer-Labor Party by calling sectarian groupings by this name.

There is a pressing need for permanent relations between the Farmer-Labor Parties that now exist and between them and progressive groups inside the old parties. We will have to take up the detailed problems of how these broad progressive movements can participate in the primaries of the old parties on a local and state scale, and organize the fight of the progressives against the reactionaries in the primaries.

A platform of social and labor legislation, nationally and in each state, furnishes the foundation, the absolutely essential foundation, for every such effort. Without a big mobilization of mass support for a platform of social and labor legislation, any move towards organizing participation in the primaries would have very bad results. Even when the foundation is laid for this mass movement, there will have to be the greatest care to avoid the inevitable dangers of throwing the masses back into the old two-party rut, instead of taking them out of it to build the Farmer-Labor Party.

There is the question of keeping the face of the Communist Party in the public eye and the platform of the Communist Party forward in all of

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this work. At the same time we cannot shove the Communist Party into everybody's face in such a way as to make the Party offensive to people. Nor should we uncover all our forces in those cases where it is necessary to have people working without being known as Communists. The problem of how to develop open and official participation of the Communist Party in all of these growing movements towards the People's Front becomes more and more important. In this respect we have to give some points of guidance. First, there must be the utmost pressing forward of every measure to create conditions in which the Communist Party can be accepted without serious difficulty by every progressive group. Great care should be taken not to prematurely push this question to a decision when the relation of forces is against us, and we are certain to be rejected. The Socialist Party in New York, ten minutes after they had been denouncing the American Labor Party, rushed to make a formal application for admission. This move considerably increased the difficulties of solving the proper relation between Socialists and Communists on one side and the American Labor Party on the other.

Under all circumstances we must give systematic attention to improving the working relations between Communists and the best progressive elements in the Farmer-Labor and progressive movement. In some places we have made considerable progress in this respect, but in many places this is still neglected, and great possibilities of work are simply left unexplored. In many places there is a sort of shyness and timidity. Some of us think a Communist should not walk into the office of another organization for fear he might not be welcome. And in many places they are looking for us, while we shy away from important contacts. There must be more attention paid to working out the friendliest relations with these progressive people, in making better contacts and in developing good working relations on all issues.

We must constantly agitate for the earliest possible national unification of the movement for a Farmer-Labor Party, without trying to press at this moment for specific organizational moves to that end, in the form of calling conferences of any kind. At this moment there is a strong hesitation, and not among the most backward circles of the Farmer-Labor Party movement, to calling a national conference. They fear that it will crystallize the issue too soon, before the broadest possible forces have been reached. We must take this hesitation into consideration and give some weight to it ourselves. We have to do everything we can to create a feeling of confidence that a Farmer-Labor Party can be successfully formed.

We have to give more systematic and constant attention to the very broad united front formations which do not enter directly into the Farmer-Labor Party movement. They furnish a very good base and support for the Farmer-Labor movement. I have in mind, especially, the American Negro Congress, the youth movements, the peace movement, church groups, fraternal organizations and so on. Most of these broad mass movements cannot immediately be a part of the Farmer-Labor Party movement. But

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they are definitely movements which can be used to extend the basis of the Farmer-Labor Party. It is absolutely an essential feature of our whole conception of the People's Front that such movements should be an integral part of the fight against reaction and fascism. As we get more definitely organized in the political field, along the lines of the People's Front, we will certainly find ourselves coming more and more into the position of the French people. There all of these broadest mass organizations are already a part of the French People's Front in a formal pact with the political parties. Although this cannot be the aim of our work at this moment, we should have in mind that we are working in that direction.

In this respect, we should mention the problem of the International Labor Defense and its growing importance. The whole question of labor defense and the struggle for labor's prisoners, internationally and nationally, is becoming more and more important. As the masses get a keener understanding of the problem of the protection of democratic rights, they are taking up the problems of political prisoners with a keenness and on a wider scale than we have ever seen in this country. Enormous things can be accomplished in the field of labor defense nationally and internationally if we give a little more attention to it.

We should mention the International Fund of our Party and the systematic financial help which our Party gives directly to other Parties in colonial and semi-colonial countries, as well as the German Party. We must insist more than ever that this International Fund should be scrupulously maintained and used as effectively as possible. It is one of the best examples of our Party's work, of its political development, of its understanding of its role. Our International Fund is one of the finest features of our Party life. I must say that I am proud of it and I hope that we will, all of us, unite in the firm determination that it is going to be maintained at all costs, and extended.

Now let us take up the special problems of the Socialist Party. It is necessary now to give an answer to what our attitude is toward the problem of the united front as a result of the changes that have taken place recently within the Socialist Party. Does this bring about any change in our tactics and proposals? As before, we still believe that the united front is absolutely necessary and even today we are confident that the majority of the Socialist rank and file want unity.

New difficulties have to be overcome to achieve the united front. We must place the struggle for the united front into the foreground as essential for the whole future existence of the Socalist Party as a whole. The Socialists must understand that nothing of a constructive nature can come out of the Socialist Party except on the basis of struggle against the counter-revolutionary Trotskyites. The ideas of the Socialist leaders have been corrupted by Trotskyite poison. The Socialist Party must rid itself of its poisonous influence, if it is to play any positive role in the struggles that loom ahead.

At this time, when the working class faces the danger of war and fascism, at a time when the people of Spain are fighting for democracy and life, Norman Thomas can find nothing better

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to do than head a so-called Committee in Defense of Trotsky. He spends time defending an assassin plotting the murder of leaders of the Soviet working class. We regret that the counter-revolutionary character of Trotskyism has left such a mark on the Socialist Party.

The only way to rid the Socialist Party of Trotskyite influence is by concentrating the struggle for the expulsion of the Trotskyites against their most apparently harmful manifestations. The Socialist Party has called a special convention for next March, as you know. We must consult with the best elements in the Socialist Party about their problems in the most helpful way. We have to help these healthy Left elements overcome the feelings of pessimism and passivity that now grip the best sections of the Socialist Party. They can make some change in the life of their Party at the March convention. These honest Left wingers must build a solid foundation so that there will be no longer the old policy of drift, of never coming to a decision on all vital issues. They must prepare for the March convention of the Socialist Party to get results, to win the Socialist Party for the united front and make a clean break with the counter-revolutionary Trotskyites.

Next, we turn to the fight for peace, and this means, of course, the question of Spain, where our slogan is "everything to defend Spanish democracy". Besides the broadest and most intense political campaign that is possible, we must now, more than ever, give attention to organizing practical material help for Spain. This is not only a matter of raising funds, but of encouraging those honest democratic people who are organizing themselves to go to Spain to participate in the armed struggle against the fascist barbarians who are trying to drown a whole people in a sea of blood, who are destroying cities and civilization, who are worse than any pestilence or scourge. This movement towards volunteering for the armed defense of Spanish democracy is affecting all strata of serious democrats in America, especially the workers, but also middle class, professional and liberal people. We can only welcome all such heroic volunteers and urge that more persons follow their example which is in the best tradition of American love of democracy and hatred of tyranny.

The whole question of using the great mass sentiments against fascism can most effectively be crystallized around the struggle for the Spanish people, around the struggle for the defense of these particular outstanding champions of democracy and progress.

Let us also not forget, as there is sometimes a tendency to, the rallying slogans against war and fascism that strike directly at the worst enemies of peace, the slogans for the freedom of Thaelmann, for the freedom of other prisoners of the Nazis, for the freedom of Prestes. This latter has especially great significance in relation to the Inter-American Peace Conference today. There are governments present there, pressing directly on the path toward fascism in the Americas, who are parading in Buenos Aires as defenders of democracy on an international scale.

We must never forget that 90 per cent of the American people are reso-

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lutely opposed to war. It is this mass sentiment that must be crystallized into an effective weapon for peace. Through effective agreements for limited aims, through avoiding rigid forms, we must weld that healthy sentiment into a form to which the people are accustomed, and through this really mobilize them against war. We must take more serious responsibilities in helping to build the American League Against War and Fascism and bring it into a much broader united peace movement. Without such methods we will not be able to meet the issue of the coming war with any degree of effectiveness. It is only through the broadest mass federations of the organized peace sentiment of the country that we can really have some influence in America on the question of war and peace. We know that a small Party, even like ours, can influence the national life. We have proved it in the elections. Now we must prove it after the elections on the decisive question of war.

We have the special problem of cultivating closer cooperation with our brother Parties in colonial and semi-colonial countries. This has become an organized part of our life; but we still have a tendency to allow it to fall back into too much of an organizational routine and to some small material help. We must try again to revive the old project of making groups or districts of our Party give special consideration to Latin-American countries and our brother Parties there. In order to develop this closer, more intimate, contact with our brother Parties, we must do more than rely on general and formal relations of cooperation.

A special task in this fight for peace is involved in the utilization of the present Inter-American Peace Conference in Buenos Aires. We can use the peace sentiments and tendencies that were expressed at this conference to create better conditions, a better atmosphere for our whole peace work. We must endeavor to exert a direct influence among these circles, especially those in Latin-America, which are only beginning to come into contact with the proletarian peace movement in the United States.

There are many positive features of the Inter-American Conference which can be effectively utilized. In spite of all its shortcomings, the Inter-American Peace Conference does constitute a move against the fascist aggression. By that alone, it becomes a positive feature in the world situation, which can be used in the fight for peace.

Now, more than ever, there is the necessity for the fullest possible understanding of the Soviet Union as the bulwark in the fight for peace, and in the fight for progress of the whole world. How can that be done better than by popularizing the new Soviet Constitution, and when we consider that Constitution, what greater instrument is there than the recent speech of Comrade Stalin in presenting this Constitution to the Congress of Soviets? Would it not be a good idea if we would take Stalin's speech and make that a concentration point of literature distribution? I think that the Central Committee should issue a million copies of this pamphlet at a very cheap price. I am sure that if we could distribute a million copies of the speech on the Soviet Constitution,

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it would help make for a better understanding of the land of socialism as the bulwark of peace and progress for all humanity.

We can now turn to the tasks of building and strengthening our Party. It is an established fact that the spontaneous struggles of the workers for economic demands and democratic rights cannot give the understanding and strength necessary to win socialism. What is required is the leading role of the Communist Party which teaches and guides the workers, which increases the fighting fitness of the working class for all struggles. It is in this connection that I want to deal with some organizational problems of our Party in order to examine those elements of our work which do not strengthen the working class and which prevent our Party from growing as fast as the situation requires.

First, I want to point out how the problem of building the Party is the problem of achieving two characteristic features of Lenin's teaching: the highest degree of centralization of direction and authority, together with the utmost decentralization of personal responsibility for carrying out the work. Let us examine the teachings of Lenin on this question, who said:

"The Committee must endeavor to achieve the maximum division of labor, remembering that different branches of revolutionary work demand different abilities."

This is another way of expressing the old American saying: Find a square hole for a square peg and a round hole for a round peg. This involves the whole question of personal responsibility. It means that each committee must know the capabilities and interests of each individual member. It means that they must know the kind of person each phase of work needs. Collectively, together with the individual comrade, they must shape the policies of the work, guide and help the individual, and thus enable him to grow to greater political maturity, to establish his authority to the highest degree among the workers associated around him. We must bear in mind that only in this way is there the possibility of developing capable leadership that can serve the working class and the Party to the best of their trained abilities. That will certainly avoid the unnecessary shifting of personnel that is one of our troubles, and will contribute to the stability of Party leadership among the working class.

Now that we have stressed the decisive question of personal responsibility and careful attention, the next link and the most important one is to lift our units, fractions in unions and mass organizations, section leaderships and districts to the level of the high political tasks that they are confronted with. This can be achieved only if the lower bodies of the Party are not just institutions for carrying out organization tasks outlined by the central leadership. They have to become in the near future the basis for shaping the policies of their organizations, of the workers with whom they come in contact. In that respect, on the question of how centralized leadership needs decentralization of tasks, Lenin gave us a permanently valid directive:

"We must centralize the leadership of the movement. We must also (and indeed for that purpose, for decentralization is impossible without information) effect the greatest

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possible *decentralization of responsibility towards the Party* of every individual member, of every section of work and of every circle belonging, or adhering to the Party. Such decentralization is an essential condition for, and an essential correction to, revolutionary centralism."*

We must consider the problem of activizing the units and sections, and emphasize the special role of factory units. We must again remind ourselves of our decisions to promote new cadres, fresh forces out of mass work, those who have shown the greatest capacity for rousing, leading and organizing the masses. We must cultivate these cadres, train them, and systematically develop them to higher levels of leadership.

We must build up the authority of our leading committees everywhere. It should be the task of a leading committee to establish respect among the people with whom it works, the respect that comes from the expectation that here is the place where we will get the answers to our question, here is where we can go for help, here is where we can be told those things that we can't find anywhere else. We have got to create that same authority, especially in our district committees. And the whole labor movement in the region should be taught to look to the district committee of the Communist Party as the place where they can go for authoritative answers to their problems, for serious help in overcoming their difficulties.

The centralization of leadership and authority and the decentralization of tasks are not yet fully understood. That is why we have so many troubles with recruiting. On the question of recruiting, we must again call attention to the problem of concentration. I don't have to repeat the principle involved in this. We must point out that we do have a tendency to forget it. In the building of the Party, education and training become more and more important, especially the education and the training of picked personnel. We have gained many experiences in the past year which could be used effectively. There is the question of books and pamphlets, where we have made many important advances, and the press, where our experiences were not so good. There is the question of our schools, the question of forums and the more systematic use of the principle of forum organization, the problems of the radio, the problems of taking advantage of the capitalist press, a technique which we have just begun to touch, but which in general we neglect absolutely, the question of the movies, the theater and arts, and all of these special activities, which must have a very distinct place in our process of mass education.

Especially important in the question of mass education are the *Daily Worker* and *Sunday Worker*. There can be no building of the Party without the much more successful extension and systematic regular connection of the *Daily Worker* and *Sunday Worker* with the broad circle of workers around the Party. There is a close connection between weak recruiting in the Party and the weak development of the circulation of the *Daily Worker*. Let the entire Party membership become conscious of the need

* V. I. Lenin, "A Letter to a Comrade on Our Organizational Tasks." *Collected Works*, Vol. V.

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of making the *Daily Worker* and the *Sunday Worker* our main weapons in the systematic development of our connections, their education and their recruitment into the Party.

We must bring to the fore now the necessity of spreading the Party organization to new territory, and especially to small towns. This was emphasized in my mind very much by the experiences in Illinois, where the comrades informed me that the terrible election law there had a very good result for our Party. It forced us to go to every county in the state to get signatures. And we found that in the majority of the counties that we had never touched before, we had friends, people who had been waiting for us for years, people who said: "Where have you Communists been all the time? We have been looking for you for years, and you are the first live Communists we ever saw."

We must make greater efforts to extend our work among the Negro people. This should be a special point of concentration in recruiting. The burden should not be placed on our Negro comrades, but must be one of the major tasks of the entire Party. Likewise we should extend much more aid to our young comrades. We must help them with their special problems, especially the big job of preparing for their eighth national convention in April.

Throughout this whole work of building the Party, we must pay special attention to a higher quality of work. Here I want to mention what a great role the slogan of better quality of work played in the building of socialism in the Soviet Union, in the mastering of the tasks of industrialization, in the execution of the Five-Year Plan in four years. You will remember Stalin's great speech on this question and how it was decisive in the whole construction of socialism. Let us apply a little bit of that to our much smaller problems of just building the first foundations of a mass Party.

Without this constant struggle for quality, for ever higher quality in our work, we cannot move forward. The building of the Party is not merely adding greater volume of Communists, more numbers, concentrating on statistics. It is essentially and centrally the question of constantly improved quality, greater effectiveness in every phase of our work. That means the better inner organization of our work, better distribution of our tasks, personal responsibility, and the avoidance of what is always a danger especially for our Party, the danger of departmental fetishism and the impersonalization of work.

Here again we can make some very good application of the experiences in the building of socialism in the Soviet Union. In their struggle for quality, you will remember they came to the question of the necessity of personal responsibility and the abolition of all impersonal forms of the organization of work. You remember how they expressed this so classically in the railroad industry. There had been an old practice of constantly shifting an engineer from one engine to another which resulted in the destruction of an enormous amount of the power resources of engines and railroads. What a tremendous improvement they made when they adopted a policy of making one engineer responsible for one en-

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gine. They made him personally responsible for the engine and did not merely place responsibility upon the engineering department for all the engines. One person was responsible for one machine and no excuses were allowed if the machine was not in good order.

All of these things are merely the concrete phases of the whole problem of the Bolshevization of the Party. Bolshevization includes all the measures we have spoken of, on the basis of a mastery of the theory of Marxism-Leninism.

V. The Relation of the People's Front to the Struggle for Socialism

There are still some of our friends (perhaps even still a few Party members) who are worried about the possibility that the struggle for the People's Front and its demands (which are compatible with the continuance of capitalism) may lead us to neglect or forget about our final goal of socialism. Some months ago, for example, our friend Scott Nearing wrote me a letter in which he developed the theory that, while the People's Front was necessary, it could not be built by the same party which fights for socialism. There must be a division of labor, so to speak, between two parties of the working class, one of which should struggle for the People's Front and its demands and the other should struggle for socialism. He seemed to think that the Socialist Party formerly had the first role and the Communist Party the second, and that now the roles are being reversed, with the C.P. taking the "reformist" road of the People's Front and the S.P. becoming the "revolutionary" party. Although Nearing is by no means a Trotskyist, it is clear that in this he was influenced by the Trotskyite tendency of thought, which has wrought such havoc in Socialist ranks lately. Whether he would be of the same opinion now, after the campaign, is questionable; but still the problem requires continuous clarification for many people. This is our task, which we undertake without complaint. Every vital problem requires constant reexamination and restatement, so also the problem of the relation of the People's Front to the struggle for socialism.

Our country, in common with the rest of the capitalist world, is threatened with reaction, fascism, and war. The reactionary forces are strong and menacing. On the other hand, those standing for socialism, which is the only final solution, are relatively weak —in the U.S.A. especially weak. Must we therefore become pessimists, and concede in advance that reaction and fascism must surely win, and that only through the bitter sufferings of fascism can the great majority be won to socialism? No, that would be absolutely wrong, it would be criminal, it would amount to a silent partnership with reaction. Although the great toiling majority of the population are not ready to struggle for socialism, they *are* ready to defend their democratic rights and living standards against the attacks of reaction and fascism, and they are more and more anxious to struggle for the maintenance of peace. Organized and roused to struggle, on a platform for which they are now prepared, they can and will prevent fascism from coming to power. We can organize and rouse them—pro-

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vided we do not demand of them that they agree with our socialist program, but unite with them on the basis of their program which we make also our own.

They are not socialists yet for many reasons: among these are that they have many prejudices and misconceptions about socialism and communism; that they think the problems can be worked out under a corrected and purified capitalism, and so forth. They believe that further experience will prove they are right. We disagree with them, we think that only socialism will finally solve our problems, and we believe that experience will prove that we are right. In the meantime, both those who want socialism and the much larger number who do not can still agree on the necessity to defeat reaction, fascism, and war. Why not, then, unite all such people for their common purpose? That is the proposal of the People's Front.

The non-socialist progressive may ask, why should we unite with those who want socialism, and who say openly they think the People's Front will ultimately give way to socialism? Our answer is, we grant you non-socialists the right to believe that the ultimate outcome will not be socialism, but in the meantime only our unity and common front will prevent fascism from being the *immediate* outcome; therefore it is better if we continue our debate on this question behind the common line of defense we set up against fascism which would stop all our discussions. To our allies in the fight against fascism, we pledge the use of democratic methods as the sole means of resolving questions in dispute between us. Which ever of us is correct in the last instance, the interests of both will be served by unity and a common front.

To the advocate of socialism, who fears the People's Front as an obstacle to achieving the new socialist society, we say: Do you really think that socialism can come without the active support of these great masses of toiling people who are not adherents of socialism yet? Of course you don't. Do you think you can win them over, if in face of the danger of reaction, fascism and war, you stand aside from them and refuse cooperation except upon the terms of their agreement to socialism? If you really think that, then you are poor socialists indeed, for you have failed to learn the elementary lessons of the great founders of modern socialism, Marx and Engels, and of their most worthy pupils who founded and built the first socialist society, Lenin and Stalin.

The problem for practical builders of socialism and fighters for socialism is everywhere and at all times to find the connecting link which ties up the life problems of the masses of the toiling people *at the present moment* with their largest historical interests that are represented in the future socialist society. They, the tens of millions who provide the moving force of history, must be convinced *upon the basis of their own experience in struggle* of the necessity and inevitability of each successive step of their movement toward socialism. The more they are organized and roused in struggle against the evils of capitalism the quicker they can understand and assimilate the teachings of socialism, and consciously take the path to the new society.

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Now, when capitalism in decay, capitalism rotting and collapsing, is turning more and more to fascism and war, blindly and brutally destroying everything good which had been created in the period of its upward development, it is possible and necessary for us to do everything to get *tens of millions* into organized struggle against these most reactionary manifestations of capitalism. That is the quickest and most direct road to socialism—if the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin are correct. For those, non-socialists, who do not accept these teachings, this argument has no validity; to them we say, therefore, if the argument is not valid, you should not be afraid of it. This is an argument for socialists, not for non-socialists.

Everything that organizes and activizes the working class and its allies is progress toward socialism; likewise, everything that weakens and discourages the forces of reaction goes in the same direction. This is the fundamental conception that underlies the revolutionists' understanding of the fight for the People's Front.

What nonsense it is to think that socialism will come out of the work of an isolated sect to which socialism is a dogma and not a guide to action here and now in the daily struggle against capitalism's worst oppressions! That is a repetition of the sterile dogmatism of the Socialist-Labor Party, and will bring the same results. Only the party of the mass struggle for immediate issues today will become the party of actual socialist construction tomorrow.

What is true within our country, is true on the largest international stage. Today it is the Soviet Union, the land of socialism, the land where is realized the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, which rallies all progressive and peace forces of the whole world in the struggle for democracy and peace—while at the same time it gives the most inspiring examples of the final victory of socialism, of its immeasurable superiority over capitalism, of its fruition in a democracy beyond the dreams of bourgeois democrats.

The struggle for the People's Front, for democracy and peace, is at the same time the most effective struggle for socialism. Just because our Party has become the outstanding fighter for the all-inclusive unity of the progressive forces of America, with a non-socialist platform on which they can be united now, for that very reason we have a confidence that is unshakable that our Party, and no other, will lead the toiling masses of the United States to the realization of socialism.

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THE 56th CONVENTION OF THE A. F. OF L.

BY JACK STACHEL

THE 56th Convention of the A. F. of L., if only because it endorsed the action of the Executive Council in suspending the unions affiliated to the C. I. O., thus increasing the danger of a long-time and widespread split in the trade union movement, must be characterized as one of the most reactionary gatherings in the fifty-five-year history of the American Federation of Labor. The reactionary leaders of the craft unions who controlled the convention, afraid of the rank and file (which is at the bottom of their refusal to organize the unorganized), concerned only with the maintenance of their power, passed a number of other reactionary measures which rob the workers of much of their trade union democracy. This attack was especially directed against the federal unions and the central labor bodies.

General Characterization

Last year the convention, through the anti-Red amendment, limited the rights of the federal locals, central labor bodies and state federations of labor in the name of the fight against Communism. They failed at that time to include in this amendment an attack against the international unions. The presence of the C. I. O. unions at the convention, constituting more than one-third of the votes, compelled them to make a retreat with their amendment insofar as it concerned the international unions. It can be said at this point that the C. I. O. unions who voted for the modified amendment are now in danger of reaping the fruits of their own mistake. For, as we pointed out at that time, starting with an attack against the Communists, the reactionaries in the council would use these new powers granted them to attack all progressives.

The A. F. of L. Council, in its fight against the C. I. O. unions (which they already had in mind when they proposed their amendment at the 55th Convention), as we now know, usurped powers which were not granted to it by the constitution. They adopted a so-called enabling measure on the basis of which they suspended the C.I.O. unions, and by depriving them of their rights at the convention had these measures approved by the Tampa convention. This measure gives the council virtual power to perpetuate itself and its policies by the device of suspending any opponent unions prior to the convention, thus assuring for themselves a majority. In addition, the convention, by

Speech delivered at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the U.S.A., held December 4-6, 1936.

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the adoption of an amendment limiting the rights of federal locals, central labor bodies, etc., with regard to the introduction of resolutions, and a resolution robbing the central bodies of the power to declare employers unfair in their community has further centralized control in the small clique of reactionary craft union leaders and robbed the rank and file and the organizations closest to the rank and file of their rights.

The reactionary character of the 56th Convention was further shown by its refusal to go on record in support of the people of Spain, against the fascist invaders. The reactionaries refused the floor to an accredited representative of the Spanish trade unions which are affiliated to the International Federation of Trade Unions. A low point in the convention was reached in the vote against the striking seamen of the Atlantic and Gulf ports. This, perhaps more than anything else, showed the true colors of the reactionary splitters.

One of the outstanding features of the convention, which characterized the reactionary trend among the top officials, was the injection of the Jewish issue in a manner which openly smacked of anti-Semitism. The fact that the reactionaries were forced into hasty retreat on this question does not in the least minimize the significance of this reactionary trend.

On a number of questions the Tampa convention continued the old policies of the reactionaries, the actions taken being practically the same as at previous conventions. In the face of the changing situation in the country, the growth of the fascist danger, on the one hand, and the Leftward movement of the masses, on the other, this attitude in itself stamps the convention as stand-pat reactionary. This includes the action of the convention opposing the Labor Party; the refusal to take a stand for curbing the Supreme Court; the failure to act in favor of application to the International Federation of Trade Unions; the failure to act against Hearst; for the freedom of the Scottsboro boys; the re-affirmation of the old position with regard to the Negro workers; the Youth Congress, etc.

But, despite the general reactionary character of the 56th Convention, quite a number of progressive resolutions sponsored especially by the central labor bodies and the federal locals were passed. Among these are the resolutions in the interest of the unemployed, for the freedom of McNamara; against the Tampa terror (a resolution which also condemned the attack on the meeting of Comrade Browder); a resolution for the organization of the young workers, and a resolution against vigilantism.

In connection with Communism, it is important to note that there was not a single resolution at this convention calling for condemnation of the Communists, nor was there any reference to this in the opening speech of Green. The only reference to Communism was in the resolution dealing with the seamen. But in the report of the Resolutions Committee there was a general condemnation of Communism along with fascism and Nazism. This report, which dealt wholesalely with numerous resolutions that were introduced against fascism, treated this question in a manner somewhat similar to that of the British Trade Union

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Congress. Strange as it may seem, there was probably less Red-baiting at this convention than at all the conventions of recent years. And this was certainly not because the Council felt that the Communists had grown weaker in the A. F. of L. They were fully aware of the presence of Communists among the delegates and of very many important resolutions sponsored by the Communists. Undoubtedly, this is due to the defeat which Red-baiting and Hearst received in the last elections, and particularly to the changed attitude of the rank and file of the A. F. of L. on this question.

A militant spirit was not absent in the convention. The progressives, coming primarily from federal locals, central bodies and state federations, did not have many votes, but they were quite a large number. What is more important, they had practically all the younger people, workers from the bench, hopeful, militant, ready for a fight. The opposite camp, it is true, had the votes. But they did not look very happy. They knew that back home the rank and file would not support their reactionary stand. Some said it. They blamed Lewis more than anyone or anything else for stirring up the rank and file against them.

A militant note was struck in the speeches of the rank and file and progressive delegates, as well as by a number of scheduled speakers from the outside. In this connection, a few speeches should be mentioned. First, the speech dealing with the fight against fascism and reaction made by Spencer Miller, in which he came out openly in support of the Spanish Loyalists; in the references to the struggle against fascism and war made by the British delegation; and in the speech of the representative of the Cuban trade unions. A second group of speeches were those dealing with the right to organize; speeches on the fight for a higher standard of living and more adequate social security made by Edwin Smith of the National Labor Relations Board and Secretary Perkins, as well as a speech calling for the curbing of the Supreme Court and for a Constitutional amendment made by Judge Padway of Wisconsin.

The Executive Council was undoubtedly conscious of the fact that the eyes of the workers were upon the Tampa convention, and sensed that the convention by its action would not finally decide the issues dividing the A. F. of L. It already felt a certain dissatisfaction even from some of the top layers of the bureaucracy of certain unions. Here it tried to cover up its reactionary and splitting policies with a tone of "militancy" which found expression particularly on such questions as the organization of the millions of unorganized, the fight for the 30-hour week, and amending the Social Security Act. In connection with the 30-hour week, it is important to note that a resolution calling upon Congress to pass the 30-hour week "without reduction of earning power" was passed over the opposition of Hutcheson. The convention, however, did not provide for those measures that could actually realize these resolutions and speeches in life; that was made obvious by its action with regard to the suspensions, the rejection of the policy of industrial unionism, etc.

These showed that the Executive Council has no more intention of

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really carrying through progressive proposals now than it had in the past. In fact, what stood out at this convention—in addition to the suspension vote—is the failure on the part of the convention to really take any steps toward the organization of the unorganized, the fight for higher wages, or to develop a program of struggle for the demands that the workers had in mind when they voted for Roosevelt. Instead, we had the sabotage of the steel drive, a stab in the back of the maritime strike, the refusal to grant charters to the agricultural workers, the office workers, and others. It could not be otherwise. A convention so reactionary as this, deciding to split the A. F. of L. on the issue of organization of the unorganized, could not be expected to take real measures to organize the struggle of the workers.

So much for some general characterizations of the convention.

The Relation of Forces

The A. F. of L. Council report showed that the per capita tax membership of the A. F. of L. was close to three and a half million. This figure was not complete insofar as it related to the unions affiliated to the C.I.O. and other progressive unions, especially unions recently chartered. For some of these unions did not pay their per capita in the recent period and their membership was arrived at by dividing their per capita payments by 12 months. The Newspaper Guild was only recently chartered, and, therefore, making only one payment, was credited with 500 members instead of its actual membership of 6,000.

It was also obvious that some of the craft unions, for example, the carpenters, paid for more members than they actually have. The carpenters were credited with 300,000 members, as against 200,000 members last year.

With the suspended unions not present, the convention had a voting strength of approximately 25,000 (2,500,000 members). The final vote on suspension was about 2,000, with some abstentions. So that even in the face of these figures it is obvious that had the C.I.O. unions been at the convention, the strength of the industrial union bloc and its supporters would have been greater this year than last year by 1,500 votes, while that of the Council would have increased by 3,000 votes, of which 1,000 came through the increased per capita payments of the carpenters.

Such a vote would not have included the important gains made by the C.I.O. unions especially among the steel, auto and rubber workers. It is also quite likely that under such conditions a number of the smaller unions that abstained or voted for the Council would have voted against the Council. It is my opinion that on the basis of actual membership, the relation of forces between the C.I.O. bloc and its supporters and the Executive Council is approximately two million to a million and a half members insofar as the vote of the officials goes. *It goes without saying that as far as the rank and file is concerned, the overwhelming majority stands for the policies of the C.I.O.* We must add that while the basic strength of the Council is in the building and metal trades departments (which does not include the basic sections of the metal

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manufacturing industry), the main strength of the C.I.O. unions lies in the basic industries of coal, metal mining, oil, rubber, auto, and in the textile and garment trades.

There was division in the ranks of the Executive Council itself. It is a well-known fact that the diehards wanted to expel the C.I.O. unions. In fact, the metal trades department went on record for expulsion and for non-recognition of the union label of the typographical and the suspended unions. But the general opposition to such action by the rank and file in the A. F. of L., as evidenced by the resolutions in the local unions, at various international unions' conventions, of state federations of labor, central bodies, was reflected even among the bureaucrats in some of the larger unions, and especially among the building trades, the backbone of the Council. There were also some delegates among the metal trades delegates who disagreed with this step of expulsion promoted by Wharton and Frey.

One of the most important factors was the presence in the convention of large delegations of federal locals, state and central bodies pledged against suspension, and a larger number of others who would have voted against suspension. In fact, some of the unions who voted for the suspension order voted so not because they were in favor of suspension, but because they did not wish to vote against the Executive Council. Many of these, as, for example, the Hotel and Restaurant delegation and part of the Pressmen's delegation (Berry), who voted to sustain the Council, would not have voted for expulsion.

This was well understood by the Executive Council. This was seen when the delegate from Milwaukee proposed an amendment to the Report of the Resolutions Committee. The amendment was first ruled in order by Green and then ruled out of order upon appeal by the Republican Coefield of the Plumbers. The reactionaries understood that delegates who feared to vote against the Council would have voted for an amendment which called for the lifting of the suspension and an invitation to the C.I.O. unions to take their seats at the convention.

With the C.I.O. unions absent the following delegations voted against suspensions:

INTERNATIONAL UNIONS

Typographical
Bakers
Brewery Workers
Hat and Millinery
Teachers
Meat Cutters
Newspaper Guild
Elevator Constructors
Paper Makers
Pullman Porters
Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers
Brick and Clay Workers

Some of the delegations of the international unions were split. In the case of the Pressmen the surprise vote was that of Berry. Some of his delegation, however, voted against the suspension. In the case of the Hotel and Restaurant Workers, there was at least one delegate who was opposed to suspension, but was forced to vote on the basis of unit rule. Undoubtedly this was true of other delegations.

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A surprise vote, indeed, was that of the delegation of the Fur Workers' International Union for suspension. It was clear to everybody that they acted contrary to the wishes of the membership. These delegates were elected before the reunification of the union as a result of the merger with the Industrial Union. This vote served to symbolize the disparity between the vote of the officials and their rank and file in the other international unions.

With regard to the state federations —although there were listed 35 delegates, only 23 voted (some were actually absent), with 13 for suspension and 10 against.

FOR SUSPENSION

Connecticut
Illinois
Indiana
Maryland
Massachusetts
Missouri
New Jersey
New York
Ohio
Rhode Island
Texas
Washington
Wisconsin

AGAINST SUSPENSION

Alabama
California
Georgia
Iowa
Kentucky
Minnesota
Nevada
Pennsylvania
South Carolina
West Virginia

There is no question about the fact that the majority of the state federations are against suspension. This is evidenced by many of those who stayed away and abstained. Among those 13 who voted for suspension there were only two or three whose conventions had approved this policy. Most of them did not vote for the suspension although they did not repudiate the action of the Council. But as for Connecticut and Wisconsin, the conventions of these bodies had gone on record against suspension. Others, like Ohio, had gone on record for unity.

Out of 734 central labor bodies in the country, only 67 voted. Of these, 39 voted for suspension and 28 against. A few others abstained, undoubtedly, because they were opposed to suspension, but feared to vote openly against the Council. It is thus seen that the central bodies which are the closest to the rank and file and the local unions cannot be counted upon to carry through the splitting policies of the Council.

The vote of the central bodies and the state Federations of Labor was until now and still is the chief reason why the Council does not dare take up the issue of the ousting of the delegates from the C.I.O. unions from these bodies.

As for the 51 federal local unions who voted (out of 914 chartered), 33 voted against suspension and only 18 voted for suspension. There were some 20 additional delegates present who did not vote. It should be noted at this point that the agricultural workers' federal local delegates were the largest number from any one group and voted solidly as a bloc

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against suspension. With auto, rubber and radio (which were the largest and most militant bloc last year among the federal locals) now organized in international unions and therefore not represented this year, the number of federal locals was smaller. The agricultural group was the outstanding group among the federal locals, the most militant, and gave leadership to the other federal locals. Much will be heard from them in the future.

The C.I.O., the Socialist Party, etc.

What was the role of the Committee for Industrial Organization at the Tampa convention? First, we must state that not only did the C.I.O. unions that were suspended stay away from the convention, but a number of state federations, federal locals and especially central bodies also stayed away under the direct influence of the C.I.O.

At the convention those unions that are affiliated to the C.I.O. (hatters), or connected with it through their officials (typographical), or the state federations and central bodies directly influenced and led by those coming from C.I.O. unions, made no attempt to organize the progressive forces. Had the C.I.O. people organized the forces among some of the top leaders, and had Howard (who though in Tampa did not attend the sessions of the convention) come to lead these forces—undoubtedly a more effective fight could have been made with perhaps some additional votes gained against suspension.

As it was, Zaritsky was the outstanding leader of the C.I.O. forces at the convention. He made the principal speech immediately following the report of the Resolutions Committee. Although there were at least two members of the Resolutions Committee who refused to sign the report as it pertained to the C.I.O., there was no minority report. Had a minority report been made, the vote would have taken place on a more favorable placing of the question. The absence of such a minority report must be ascribed to the unwillingness or the failure on the part of Howard-Zaritsky to work in that direction.

The speech of Zaritsky, in the main, was good and effectively presented. He took up all the major issues, including the question of the usurpation of power by the Council, the issue of industrial unionism and the organization of the unorganized, as well as the injection of the Jewish issue in the report of the Resolutions Committee.

The two wings of the Socialist Party divided on this issue as they stood before the convention. The Right-wing Socialists organized in the Social-Democratic Federation—insofar as they made their voice felt—in their vote stood by the Executive Council. Outstanding here was the speech of Samuel Beardsley of the Jewelry Workers' International Union. He spoke and voted for suspension. Characteristic of the role that these gentlemen perform in the labor movement, he did this in the name of "unity" and in the name of industrial unionism. The militant Socialists, representing the official Socialist Party, to the degree to which they expressed themselves at the convention, voted against suspensions. But they were not a very large group. Most of the Socialist Party delegates came from Wisconsin.

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which has a special brand of "Socialism" all by itself. The Socialist Party could not exercise strict discipline among its delegation. There was the vote of Lawson of the Quarry Workers' International, who voted for suspension. Lawson was on the Thomas-for-President Committee, but we are not certain whether or not he is a member of the Socialist Party. There were one or two similar cases.

In the convention as a whole, the Old Guard Socialists, who were few in number, of course, were united with the Council on all questions, while the delegates influenced by the Socialist Party voted for all progressive measures.

The Socialists did not enter into any formal caucus with our Party. They attended the most important and broadest caucus meeting, consisting of Communists, Socialists and progressives generally.

The Role of the Party

There were present a number of progressive delegates elected with the help of the Party, who came with instructions to work with the Left and progressive forces.

The number of Party members present was about the same as last year and many times the number of both wings of Socialists. Two delegates joined the Party. Considering the fact that the C.I.O. unions were not there, and that the bulk of those from the federal locals last year are now in international unions, this number is fair. But, at the same time, we must be critical of those districts that had no delegates at all, and we should especially have had more delegates from central bodies.

Our comrades participated with others in calling together a number of meetings where the progressive bloc was crystallized. The biggest meeting was attended by some 70 delegates, including a number from international unions, state federations, central bodies, as well as federal locals. At this meeting, a committee was organized to guide the work and to contact some of the other progressive delegates.

We can state that the work of our comrades at the convention helped give backbone to whatever progressive forces that were crystallized, and to the fight that was made for the C.I.O. and other progressive measures. Had it not been for our comrades, the discussion on the C.I.O. would not have taken on the character that it did. Many of the resolutions of a progressive character would not have passed, and would not even have been introduced. And, above all, there would not have been the large number of votes cast against suspension, on the part of the state federations, central bodies and federal unions present.

The local Party committee gave all the assistance we asked for. We were encouraged on some days to find that the *Daily Worker* was sold openly in front of the convention hall, although for some reason this was not done regularly. This was probably the first time that the *Daily Worker* was sold openly in Tampa. We feel that as a result of the convention and the favorable action taken on the Tampa resolution, which we introduced, the Party in Tampa can now go forward much more openly in the building of a progressive movement in the

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trade unions, and the People's Front, as well as in the building of the Party itself.

Perspectives and Tasks

The convention, by not expelling the C.I.O. unions, left the door open for further negotiations. The resolution adopted and as interpreted by the Council, is as follows:

1. The Council has the power to lift the suspension prior to, or after negotiations.

2. The committee previously set up, with Harrison at the head, is the standing committee which is to try to negotiate with the C.I.O.

3. Should no agreement be reached, and should the C.I.O. take a further step which the Council would think requires further action (in other words, expulsion), the Council must call a special convention.

4. The Council will not, for the present, ask for the unseating of C.I.O. union delegates from state federations and central bodies, but there is no question that it has the power and may do this if it finds it necessary and possible.

The decisions of the convention are not merely a middle course between lifting the suspension and the expulsion demanded by the diehards. Many of the diehards voted for this course in the belief that this is the best way to carry through the expulsion, by trying to place the responsibility for the split upon the C.I.O. This is seen from the fact that the Council at its meeting following the convention voted down a proposal for a compromise with the C.I.O. which would set up an industrial union department in the A. F. of L. to be headed by Lewis. Those who favored this proposal, the so-called middle group headed by Harrison, were defeated by the diehard craft union clique.

At the same time, a new issue has arisen which did not exist before: as to the powers of the Council and the character of the A. F. of L. Howard has strongly emphasized this new issue.

Thus we can see that the prospects for the reunification of the A. F. of L. received an additional blow at the A. F. of L. convention. The Council is unyielding and provocative, and stubborn in its refusal to allow the organization of the unorganized, thus actually forcing the split. The C.I.O. cannot and will not accept a compromise on the terms of the Executive Council. A compromise on their terms, which means virtual capitulation, would be a betrayal of the interests of the workers.

In the face of this situation the most important task is the intensification of the campaign for the organization of the unorganized, and especially the steel workers, keeping the C.I.O. united, while at the same time developing a unity campaign throughout all of the unions of the American Federation of Labor. In the statement of the Central Committee, issued toward the close of the A. F. of L. convention, we already gave our position in favor of this course.

This demands of us that we develop simultaneously the most intensive campaign of support for the organization of the unorganized in the mass production industries, and at the same time carry the fight for unity, and against the splitting policies of

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the Council into every craft union, into all state federations and central bodies.

Only if the relation of forces changes in favor of the C.I.O. through the organization of important sections of the unorganized and the simultaneous strengthening of the progressive forces in the craft unions will unity be possible on a basis that will not compromise the fundamental aims of the C.I.O.

This demands that the line of the Party shall be made clear to the entire Party and to all those workers whom we influence. We must mobilize our full strength to carry through the line of the Party. It requires that we make clear to the workers the action of the A. F. of L. convention and mobilize them to fight for our policies.

Our task in the C.I.O. unions is to fight for the maintenance of the unity and common action of all the C.I.O. unions. We must oppose all tendencies in some of the C.I.O. unions to withdraw from the C.I.O., and to make their own compromise with the Council. In those unions where this danger exists (I.L.G.W.U., Hatters) we must mobilize the rank and file and all progressives to defeat such tendencies.

At the same time within the C.I.O. unions we must carry on the fight for improvement of the conditions of the workers, for trade union democracy, so that the workers in the other A. F. of L. unions will see in the unions affiliated to the C.I.O. an example of progressive trade unionism. Naturally the character of our work in the C.I.O. unions, how we bring forward our proposals, how we organize the fight for these proposals, must take into account our general policy toward the C.I.O. and the Executive Council.

We must strive to convince the leaders of the C.I.O. to give support to all the struggles of the workers in the other unions, as, for example, the present nationwide strike of the maritime workers. Here, too, they must show to the workers everywhere the meaning of progressive trade unionism in practice.

We must also convince the leaders of the C.I.O. nationally and in the localities to take measures in the interests of the workers through championing a legislative program in defense of the economic and political interests of all workers, in the struggle against reaction and fascism, in support of the people's movement against fascism and war, and in the building of the Farmer-Labor Party.

Our most important task is to mobilize all our forces to assist in the organization of the unorganized, and especially of the steel workers, the auto and textile workers, as well as the millions of agricultural workers. Campaigns in these industries will, of course stimulate the organization of other workers, which must be supported by our Party in these industries and localities. Our Party is showing through its work in the steel industry that it is playing and can play an important role. Our experiences in the factories, in the company unions, among the Negro steel workers, the youth, the mobilization of the fraternal movement in support of the campaign, the drawing in of the women, have already greatly contributed to the success achieved. But, frankly, we have in many of these fields done very little, especially with regard to the Negro workers, the

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young workers, and the drawing in of the women. We must draw the lessons of these experiences for the purpose of really carrying through these tasks. Especially now in the more intense phase of the drive when the conditions are more favorable than before is this necessary.

The lessons of the steel campaign can be applied by our Party with equal force to the organizing campaign in the other industries, making due allowances for the special problems that the various industries confront us with.

In the work of organizing the unorganized let us again remind ourselves of our past experiences, and especially of the Open Letter of 1933. I refer to the tasks outlined in the Open Letter with regard to the mobilization of the entire Party through the lower Party organizations, and not merely carrying on the work with a few active comrades from the top. I refer to the effective policy of concentration; to work in the shops, the building of committees in the plants and departments; to the need for special attention to the Negro workers and other special strata. All these lessons can be applied now in this big drive with hundred-fold results by combining these well-known experiences with the mass character and special methods that can now be used.

And let us not forget another lesson of the past—the role of the Party. Not generally, but the Party in the shop, the Party in the union, the effectiveness of the shop nuclei, the shop paper, etc. And, of course, the building of the Party, without which our work cannot be fully effective at any time, and never secure.

Here is where we meet the real test—in the campaign for the organization of the unorganized. Here is where all basic issues will finally be decided—the issue of unity, the building of the Farmer-Labor Party, our status in the labor movement.

Special attention must be given to bringing the fight for trade union unity into the craft unions, into all the non-C.I.O. unions. Here we must overcome the weaknesses of the past that made it possible for the craft leaders to frighten many workers into believing that the triumph of the C.I.O. policies will lead to the destruction of their unions.

This requires the working out of practical programs for the organization of the unorganized where they are eligible for these unions, and in the fields which belong to them, and not in conflict with the C.I.O. campaign in the mass production industries. We must show them how the C.I.O. campaign will protect and raise the wages of the skilled workers. We should develop, where necessary, programs for amalgamation, beginning in practice with joint action in the localities and draw the lessons from such cooperation. Especially is such an approach necessary in the building trades and among the members of the Machinists' Union. Finally, they must be shown how division in the labor movement will worsen their economic position and strengthen the bureaucratic hold of their leaders upon the organization. With regard to the convention action, and the immediate issues, it is essential to adopt thousands of resolutions in the local unions calling for (a) immediate lifting of the suspensions as a step to-

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wards negotiations for unity; (b) Support to the steel campaign, including financial support.

These resolutions should be sent to the international officials, and to the Executive Council. More attention has to be given to the conventions of these unions, many of which will be held in the next year.

Of greatest importance are our tasks in the state federations and in the central labor bodies. The Central Labor Unions are especially important to maintain the unity of the trade union movement in the face of the continuation of the suspensions. They will be in a mood for action as a result of the decisions of the last convention which robbed them of their rights with regard to their effectiveness in strikes, in bringing forward issues at A. F. of L. Conventions, as well as the decision of the 55th Convention relative to Communists being barred as delegates to the Central Labor Unions.

Under these conditions, the Central Labor Unions, which are the closest bodies to the rank and file, having delegates directly from the local unions, and to which are elected many rank-and-file workers, are destined to play perhaps a bigger role than we today realize. A hint of this role we can sense from the fear the Executive Council has regarding the Central Labor Unions, the pains to which they went to try to stifle their voice. Not only will they play a role in preventing the split, and for reunifying the labor movement, but the Central Labor Unions will more and more express the desires of the membership, and their common action in struggles for the economic and political interests of the workers. The A. F. of L. Council has evidently not forgotten the San Francisco general strike, the role of the Central Labor Unions in Toledo, Akron and other centers of struggle. Neither should we. The A. F. of L. Council is drawing the conclusions from the opposition of the majority of the Central Labor Unions to the suspension of the C.I.O. unions. So should we. The A. F. of L. Council, which opposes the Labor Party, is drawing the conclusion from the role of the Central Labor Unions in the growing movement for a Farmer-Labor Party, and even the role they played in Labor's Non-Partisan League. We must also draw our conclusions.

There has been quite an improvement in our work in the central bodies. Our fractions have grown in number and in effectiveness. But things are not yet as they should be. Take for example the fraction in the Central Labor Union in the largest city in the country—New York. Here our fraction is quite large and growing. Yet our work, though improved, is far from satisfactory. There are still comrades who do not attend the meetings of the Central Labor Union, not to speak of fraction meetings, where questions are taken up and decided upon which determine our effectiveness at the Central Labor Union meetings. There are even comrades in locals who take their time about electing delegates.

Yet there can be no more important work than that of the delegates to the Central Labor Union. Supposing one of our comrades would be elected to the City Council in New York. I am sure that he or she would attend

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regularly, and prepare for every issue. Yet is not the Central Labor Union in New York equally important? I think we ought to give it the same attention. And if we do, the time will not be far off when we will also have Party comrades as members of the City Council. For here in the Central Labor Union we have the possibility of coming forward with our proposals in the interests of all the workers and the toiling population of the city generally. Here our comrades come forward as spokesmen of the masses. Here we can advance the movement for the building of the Labor Party in addition to more specific trade union issues.

From now on we should in every district give attention to the work and the problems of the Central Labor Unions, as we should where we have a parliamentary fraction.

I am sure that most of us feel that never was there so much joy connected with the work of the Party as today. It is not a joy that is coupled with any self-satisfaction. On the contrary. It is a joy that is tempered by a feeling that we are losing valuable time—that we are not fully taking advantage of the great response among the masses. But it is a joy that comes from the realization that the Party is advancing, that its work is more and more effective, that its advances are registered in results which form the basis for an ever greater advance. And in this advance, we discover old and new problems, not yet solved, that impede this advance. But our confidence in our Party, in the leadership of Comrades Browder and Foster, in the masses, in our growing experience, assures us that once we apply ourselves to removing the obstacles in the road, we shall go forward many times faster, with ever greater effectiveness, carrying the masses with us, to the goal of socialism with our Party ever at the head.

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THE NEGRO PEOPLE AND THE ELECTIONS

BY JAMES W. FORD

THE year 1936 was a critical period in the history of the colored people, the most crucial election since the Civil War. Eminent men and women who had hitherto been considered moored to Republicanism were dissatisfied with the nomination of Landon and the reactionary Republican program. A revolt took place among the rank and file. At the opening of the campaign the revolt had not crystallized; it was solidified during the short period of a four-month campaign. A tidal wave of resentment seemed to grow higher every day.

The Negro people were alarmed by the facts piling up daily which exposed the forces of reaction in and around the Republican Party. Old line colored politicians tried to convince them of the need to support the Republican Party. Roscoe Conkling Simmons, Perry Howard and other Negro Republican leaders in their usual role of long standing service to that party made extraordinary efforts to hold the Negro people to their old ties.

Negroes Break Old Ties

Chicago was the rock-ribbed haven of Republicanism among Negroes. It was pathetic, up to the very day of election, to see the faith that some colored people placed in the victory of Landon. Their leaders controlled all avenues of information and opinion. The *Chicago Defender,* one of the oldest and largest Negro newspapers, was the mouthpiece of the Republican Party. It was regrettable that there was so little means of bringing the breadth of political discussion, going on throughout the country, into Chicago. Only the excellent campaign of Harry Haywood, Communist candidate for Congress, brought the real issues to the people of the South Side of Chicago.

The Roosevelt landslide saw twenty-five Negroes elected to the state legislatures of nine states and one to the Congress of the United States. The majority were Democrats. In several instances Negro Republicans were succeeded by Negro Democrats. No Negro legislative candidate running on the Democratic ticket was defeated.

A Political Revolution

Despite all of the work of the *Chicago Defender,* in Chicago, which is nominally a Republican stronghold, Negroes gave Roosevelt a majority of their votes. It was only in the second and third wards of Chicago (as in

Speech delivered at the Plenum of the Central ommittee of the Communist Party of the U.S.A., held December 4-6, 1936.

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Vermont and in Maine) that there was a Republican majority and this was the only Negro community anywhere in the country.

It is estimated that 200,000 Negroes voted in Pennsylvania, the majority giving their vote to Roosevelt. Six Negro Democrats were elected to the state legislature in that state. Pennsylvania, which is nominally Republican, is another example of the political revolution that took place among Negro voters.

For the first time in history Negroes in Michigan voted the Democratic ticket.

Over 150,000 Negroes voted—four to one in Harlem and two to one in Brooklyn—for Roosevelt. The Negroes gave Roosevelt a majority in every state in the union where they voted in large numbers. It is estimated that the vote was 75 per cent in New England; 65 per cent in New Jersey; 60 per cent in West Virginia; 60 per cent in Missouri. In Kansas, where Roosevelt won by a majority of 5,000 votes, Negroes voted two to one against Landon.

Approximately 3,000 Negroes voted in Durham, North Carolina, and 3,000 in Raleigh. the majority going for Roosevelt. Two Negroes were elected magistrates in Durham on the Democratic ticket. In Raleigh, a Negro was elected justice of peace on the Democratic ticket and became the first Negro to be elected to public office on any ticket since Reconstruction.

In Indianapolis, Indiana, the Democratic Party claimed every Negro precinct by over 75 per cent.

The Negro people emerged from this election in a far better position than ever before. They had taken a step in the political life of the country the like of which had not been seen since Reconstruction.

A check-up on the underlying causes for political change among colored people will reveal such depths as will shock the reactionaries and give a warning to those who dare ignore the desires of an oppressed people for justice, opportunity and freedom.

This triumphal political awakening, which is in the process of transformation, is a logical part of the developments shaking and reshaping the political structure of the whole country. The Negro people face the struggle to preserve and extend democracy in America with their heads up, fighting and ready to play their part in building a People's Front in the United States.

Hearst-Landon Soundly Thrashed

The Republican Party, which under Lincoln successfully fought the slave-owning class, has now become the most reactionary party in American politics—the party of modern industrial slavery and reaction. Its reactionary character was the principal cause of its defeat in 1936. It was defeated by a combination of decisive sections of the population, by an aroused popular sentiment which saw in the forces behind Landon man-eating tigers ready to devour everything held dear by liberty-loving people.

The Republican-Liberty League group had a shocking program. They intended to assault workers and toilers generally with a hatred and vengeance never before seen in the country, cut their wages and throw them off relief. They intended to persecute the foreign-born and strengthen the incite-

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ment of murderous jingoism, anti-Semitism, racial discrimination and lynchings in the spirit of the Black Legion and the Ku Klux Klan, and to throw the United States in its foreign policy on the side of fascist instigators of war everywhere. This Hearst-Landon program was defeated.

A Program of Life Against Death

The Communist Party at its Ninth Convention held in June, 1936, stated:

"The Negro people are becoming deeply conscious of the sinister forces of reaction that are arising in the country. We see, most of all, the Hoovers, the Al Smiths, the Talmadges and William Randolph Hearst with the Liberty League behind them, making energetic efforts to foster the reactionary Republican program on the country. How terrible would be the fate of the Negroes if the Republican-Liberty Leaguers came to power. The notorious Black Legion is a child of Republican reaction."

The demands of the Negro people are age-old and were set forth in programmatic form as follows:

Real emancipation of the Negro people.

The right of colored men and women to complete equality, equal rights to jobs, equal pay for equal work, the full right to organize, vote, serve on juries and hold public office.

The establishment of heavy penalties against mob murder, floggers and kidnappers, with the death penalty for lynchers.

The enforcement of the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution of the United States.

Full cooperation in building a Farmer-Labor Party, a People's Front to preserve and extend democracy in America.

Between two positions—the reactionary program of the Republican Party and the demands of the Negro people—President Roosevelt performed like a man on a tight rope, swaying from one side to the other. And following the election, Roosevelt, unless he is checked, will lean as far away from the issues of the Negro people as possible. Although Negroes fought for their demands (which everybody knows cannot be fully realized through the Democratic Party), and helped to pile up a landslide against reaction, it would be a mistake to think that Roosevelt was given a blank check. The Negro was cautious, and fearful of Roosevelt's allegiance to the reactionary politicians of the South.

The Negroes' vote was of no small consideration; they were wooed by both sides. They faced a complicated situation; a collapsing two-party system, the hide-bound traditions of Republicanism and the emergence of a new political movement which has already taken organized form in many sections of the country. One must not underestimate these factors.

In the past the interests of the various financial groups were effectively obscured within the two-party structure and the Negro was trapped into supporting his worst enemies. The situation was made more tragic because of the leadership of the old-line Negro politicians who understood nothing about the capitalist divisions within the limits of the two-party system, and cared nothing about the possible forces that had common interests with the Negro.

One example will make this clear. During the election campaign, Perry Howard, Negro Republican leader,

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delivered an address at Omaha, Nebraska, in which he declared: "The preponderance of intelligence is in the Republican Party. Capital is in the Republican Party. The Democratic Party is the poor man's party. The blind cannot lead the blind."

It would be going too far to honor Mr. Howard's attack by calling it slander against the great working class, nor is it merely demagogy; it is pure ignorance; it was a complete sell-out. He "received $600 per week plus expenses during the campaign".

Breaking the Two-Party System

But the two-party system did not prove an insurmountable obstacle to the colored voter in 1936. What was the character of the two-party system? Earl Browder, presidential candidate of the Communist Party, has described it with great clearness:

"For generations the two-party system of American capitalism was based upon a regionalism that roughly corresponded to basic economic groups. These were the industrial banking North, the cotton-tobacco South, the wheat-dairy-livestock-mining West. The party struggle was largely between the bourgeoisie of these three regions for their special interests. They brought forward such issues in addition as were considered necessary to undermine the mass following of the rival group, or to whip up their own supporters to greater enthusiasm. With Republicans as the party of Northern capitalism, and Democrats that of the special agrarianism of the South, the basic problem of their conflict was always which of them would win the allegiance of the West. This regionalism was accentuated by the federal system of governmental structure, with its 48 sovereign states."

The Negro people broke through this superstructure. They made a decisive swing away from the Republican Party; in some parts of the South they voted on the Democratic ticket; they acted generally on the basis of a system of *issues* and in certain places took direct part in the movement for a Farmer-Labor Party.

How was the colored voter approached in the elections? In the early part of the campaign there was uncertainty everywhere. Certain key states were considered doubtful. The strategy of both the Republicans and the Democrats was to play on the "solid" Negro vote in these states, as the "balance of power", and make every effort to win it to their side. The *Pittsburgh Courier,* one of the largest Negro newspapers in the country and supporter of Roosevelt, declared:

"In many states the Negro vote is going to be the deciding factor in this election. Colored people should be alert to this fact and not be backward in pressing their advantage, no matter for which party they have decided to vote. . . . These voters are likely to decide the election."

Mr. Paul W. Ward, well-known political commentator, wrote from Washington, D.C., in August:

"It is easy to underestimate the grip which the Republican machine bosses have upon the 1,500,000 potential Negro voters in the five key states. Only the members of the upper crust of the Negro community are to any appreciable degree political free agents. The rest do not vote: they are voted. Like his white brothers living in similar squalor in the industrial bowels and backwashes of cities, the Negro has been notoriously venal, placing his vote at the disposal of whichever machine at the moment can pay the highest price. The G.O.P. will have buying power again this year—bigger buying power, probably, than ever before—and all the factors which should make the Negro want to vote for Roosevelt must be discounted in the light of that fact."

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Despite the fact that all those things for which the Negro people have striven since Reconstruction have not been fought for, nor has the denial of their rights been challenged by the Republican Party, Republican Congressman John H. Robinson had the effrontery to declare on the floor of Congress in June:

"One of the noblest emotions that ever animated the human heart is gratitude. Can there be anything more ignoble than ingratitude? I have seen the swine in the mountains of Kentucky fill themselves day by day on the choicest nuts that fell from the oak, the chestnut and the beech, but I have never yet seen one hog look up to see the source of his bounty."

The political campaign conducted by the Republican Party among Negroes was intense. The *Chicago Defender* was the outstanding spokesman of Republicanism. On October 3, it began the first of a series of Red-baiting articles, attacking Roosevelt as a Communist. This article was entitled: "Which Way from the Crossroads?—A Contrast of Roosevelt with Russia."

It carried quotations taken from speeches or writings of Tugwell, the so-called Communist "brain-trust" adviser of Roosevelt, and of Karl Marx, Stalin, Orjonikidze, Voroshilov, and Manuilsky, which intended to prove that Roosevelt was a Communist on the order of these men. Obviously few Negroes took seriously this cry of "Communism".

An elaborate piece of propaganda consisting of an eighty-page pamphlet, published by the Colored Voters Division of the Republican National Committee, was addressed to the "American Colored People".

The cover page carried pictures of Lincoln, Landon and Knox. The picture of Frederick Douglass, the great Negro abolitionist, was carried on an inside page. However, on the very front page with the pictures of Lincoln, Landon and Knox was the following well-known quotation of Frederick Douglass:

"There is no path out of the Republican Party that does not lead directly into the Democratic Party—away from our friends directly to our enemies."*

Landon was transformed into a modern Lincoln. The pamphlet stated:

"These two men stand out in the history of Kansas: John Brown who kept it free as a territory and Lincoln who, in admitting it to the Union, kept it a free state. Now a third, Alfred M. Landon, stands upon the threshold of greatness."

The Republican Party has been in power in this country for all except 16 years since the Civil War, yet they had the effrontery to appeal to Negroes for votes in the face of the violation of their political and civil rights.

* Douglass made this statement in a critical period in the history of the Republican Party while presiding over the National Convention of Colored Citizens, held at New Orleans, in 1872. According to Douglass' remarks at that convention, "eminent men who had hitherto been looked upon as the pillars of Republicanism had become dissatisfied and were breaking away from the Republican Party. The men in revolt were Messrs. Trumbull, Schurz, Greeley, and Sumner. Mr. Schurz had already succeeded in destroying the Republican Party in the State of Missouri, and it seemed to be his ambition to be the founder of a new party, and to him more than any other man belongs the credit of what was once known as the Liberal Republican Party which made Horace Greeley its standard bearer in the campaign of that year".

It may also be noted, while speaking of allegiance to party, that it was in the same year that Frederick Douglass was nominated for Vice-President of the United States, not on the Republican Party ticket, but on the ticket of the Equal Rights League.

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They listed a series of laws passed by Democratic state governments disfranchising the Negro people as follows: "Alabama in 1900; Georgia in 1902; Louisiana in 1897; Mississippi in 1890; North Carolina in 1901; South Carolina in 1895; Virginia in 1902."*

To top their deceit the Republican politicians took full credit for the fact that the Scottsboro boys are still alive. In their pamphlet there was a full-page cut of the Scottsboro scene. A picture of a prison with the Scottsboro boys pleading for mercy was in the background. In the foreground is a large picture of Chief Justice Hughes of the United States Supreme Court carrying a law book. A lyncher, rope in hand, approaches to drag the Scottsboro boys from the prison but Justice Hughes raises a hand high while an emphatic *"no"* comes from his mouth.

If this appeal to traditional Republicanism had succeeded, Perry Howard and Roscoe Simmons would be gloating over the "delivery" of the vote of the Negro people—to their worst enemies. But these men lost sight of one little thing: the Negro people are thinking as never before. They saw through the party of the rich who use such gentlemen as Messrs. Perry Howard, Simmons and the others to entrap them.

Issues, demands and principles swept the Negro people into the landslide for Roosevelt. They were discriminating as to the internal relation of forces within the Democratic Party. They took what advantages were offered within the limits of that party. They voted in the South to elect colored men to office; they participated in the organization of state and county committees in North Carolina. A colored man was elected to office in the State of Nebraska, making it possible to raise special issues and problems of Negroes in that state.

The colored people were guided and influenced by the great issues which were agitating the minds of masses of people in this country. While important Southern white politicians were pondering the break-down of the two-party system "Negroes were seeking office in the South". When, after the election, these same Southern gentlemen declared that "victory could have been won as well without the Negro as without the Southern vote", one can see that something has taken place in American politics. It is significant when such an important political commentator of the South as John Temple Graves says that "the shift of the Negro to the Democratic ranks establishes him now as a possession to be retained and a prize to be sought in every election".

Roosevelt was clever enough to pretend to voice the hopes and aspirations of the Negro people. One of the most important weapons which he had at his disposal was a partial though far from satisfactory record of improvement in the economic conditions of Negroes.

Roosevelt was able to put forward in a widely circulated pamphlet before the Negro people the following accomplished program:

"Unemployment relief inaugurated by the Roosevelt administration saved millions of Negro men and women and children from

* During each of these years the Republican Party was in power nationally. The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution was in force and its provision provided that, "the Congress shall have the power to enforce by appropriate legislation the provisions of this article".

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extreme want by direct relief, W.P.A. and P.W.A. No racial discrimination permitted by the federal government.

"The Civilian Conservation Corps (C.C.C.) started in 1933 by President Roosevelt has given employment to over 150,000 young Negro men.

"The National Youth Administration (N.Y.A.) put in operation by the Roosevelt administration gives direct educational and economic benefits to 50,000 young Negro men and women.

"Negro appointments to key positions in Washington and throughout the country by the Roosevelt administration exceed any such number in history.

"Against economic maladjustment the Roosevelt administration stands as a symbol of national revolt against the economic maladjustment sponsored by twelve years of Republican misrule."

One of Roosevelt's important addresses was delivered at the famous Negro University, Howard University, where he declared:

"As far as it was humanly possible, the government has followed the policy that among American citizens there should be no forgotten men and no forgotten races."

Young men and women of Howard University followed this up with a strike demanding that the football team get more and better food. Striking students of North Carolina's Negro A and T College were persuaded to go back to school only after the governor of the state promised them that their demands and grievances would be met. Roosevelt never expected such action so soon after the elections.

The Negroes' Mandate to Roosevelt

What is the meaning of this great swing of the Negroes from Republicanism to Roosevelt? They believed in the promises made to them. They expect some of the equality of which Ickes spoke. They trust that "there shall be no forgotten races".

Let us hear the expression from every section of the country of the hope and determination of the Negro people. I quote from leading Negro newspaper comments and from the opinions of men in public life through out the country:

"This election has been a clear-cut mandate. It has been an unmistakable answer to reaction and the old order. It has been a constitutional way of saying that the great majority of the people of these United States want to move towards humanitarian progress and will take newly carved out roads to that goal despite the selfish stalling of the priviledged forces of reaction.

"Let it not be said of you [Roosevelt] after January that by one act or a single subterfuge you failed to act toward wiping out the American disgrace of racial discrimination in all New Deal administration.

"This should mean a complete equalization of jobs and relief to all workers without regard to race or creed. . . . Your appointment should comprise a proportionate number of colored citizens and this should obtain from top to bottom. The economic opportunity for our citizens should be so broadened . . . there should be absolutely no difference per capita wages and opportunities between colored and white.

"This is what we interpret your statement on 'no forgotten races' to mean." (Editorial, *Baltimore Afro-American.)*

"We have been honest in telling our readers that the New Deal does not completely satisfy the natural and justifiable claims of the Negro to the fullest participation in every field of American life.

"We congratulate the President upon the almost complete mandate he has received from the people and take particular pride in the role the Negro voter played. . . .

"The President has recognized our claim to complete integration in our national scheme, and nothing short of that goal will be wholly satisfying . . . equality of opportunity in every branch of government. . . . Lynching remains a dark spot on the American system of

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justice. Nothing less than stiff federal legislation will curb mob murder." (Editorial. *New York Amsterdam News.)*

"The voters out-thought these so-called leaders. Took facts which they had seen with their own eyes and heard with their own ears, and reached their own conclusions as to the best way to vote for their best interests. . . .

"We are further concerned about the possibilities of the Negroes regardless of their political opinions, being able to get together on a program which will advance the race." (Editorial, *St. Louis Call.)*

"If Mr. Roosevelt goes to bat with the Supreme Court and licks it . . . he'll be a second Abraham Lincoln to colored people.

"Many people do not know it, because it has been kept quiet, but the Supreme Court has been far more unfriendly to the colored race than Congress ever was." (Carl Murphy, *Baltimore Afro-American.)*

"At any rate, it must be driven home to the Southern Congressional leaders that the November 3rd vote was a mandate from the entire nation to run the country so all the people get a square deal. It is not a mandate from the Solid South and a few scattered Northern Democratic states.

"These congressional leaders will have to do something about the denial of the vote to the Negroes in the South. They must do something about lynching. They must act to remedy the starvation, misery and slavery of the sharecropping system. They must use their influence to see that the Negro is employed in private industry, and not made a permanent pauper class. These things are essential to a new deal, a more abundant life, and a 'happier America'.

"The outlook is not so rosy for the Negro. But the best that can be said is that the forces of reaction have been beaten back for the moment. A hard battle is ahead of us." (Roy Wilkins, Assistant National Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of the Colored People.)

"The Negro population and vote demand that the governor name a Negro to fill the vacancy in the Appelate Division of the Supreme Court." *(New York Amsterdam News.)*

"Some of the horny-headed problems of discrimination and governmental inequalities are staring us in the face.

"The number of our citizens on relief still increases or remains at a higher level than whites in proportion to population.

"Not one single family on relief is getting sufficient to take proper care of a family, nor are the single men and women being thus helped receiving sufficient to think about mating and bringing children into the world." (William N. Jones, *Baltimore Afro-American.)*

"The Negro can expect nothing unless he exerts mass pressure after election. . . . Political history shows that governments respond to mass pressure. If their leadership were well directed, Negroes with their balance of power vote could demand almost anything they want in this country." (Lester Granger, Secretary of Workers' Councils of the National Urban League, *St. Louis Call.*

"We are concerned now with our second emancipation, and will cast our vote only to those who are leading us towards that day. . . . The new American Labor Party, polling 300,000 votes, marks itself as the real third party of New York state. It, too, must get busy if it wants to achieve any results in Harlem. It must put Negroes on its Executive Committees. It must fight within unions for Negro membership. It must organize Negro labor.

"Roosevelt is in. He is in with a decisive mandate from the American laboring masses to govern in the interests of the majority. His social ideals must not be allowed to waver, but he must continue vigorously his fight for those who put him in. The Negro is demanding of him an endorsement of the anti-lynching bill and a more prominent place in the administration of national affairs." (Dr. A. Clayton Powell, Jr., New York City.)

Here, culled from a cross-section of Negro opinion throughout the country, is the mandate of the Negro people to Roosevelt following the elections. Space does not permit other opinions and direct expressions of

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the people's support to these demands. In Harlem on December 19 a great demonstration of relief workers took place demanding no cut in relief, no discrimination against Negroes.

The program of the Communist Party became the program of masses of Negroes. A careful survey of the demands listed above compared with the platform put forward by the Communist Party in the elections will show that the Communist Party was correct in its demands for the Negro people. It was this program that we fought for.

The Communist Party Fights for Negro Rights

On the day following the elections the Associated Negro Press sent out the following dispatch:

"One of the surprises of the recent national elections—apart from the almost complete loss of identity of the Grand Old Party—was the remarkable gain, nationally, made by the Communist Party in both voting strength and interest aroused throughout the country. Better organization methods, timeliness of their appeal to the workers of the nation and their unequivocal stand against jim-crowism, bigotry and color prejudice are some of the reasons advanced by political observers for the showing made by the Communists at the present election. For the second time, a Negro, James W. Ford of Alabama, was the Communist candidate for Vice-President."

Comrade Browder's visit to the Scottsboro boys in the county jail in Birmingham, Alabama, during his campaign in the South was one of the outstanding events in this whole campaign and was hailed by the Negro press in every section of the country. Nearly every one of 250 weekly Negro newspapers carried Browder's picture with the Scottsboro boys. His fight at Terre Haute was considered by leading Negro people a part of the struggle for civil rights for Negroes. His speech at the state university in Virginia, where he raised the problems of the Negro in the South, was also hailed, as well as his great fight at Tampa, Florida.

The candidacy of James W. Ford for the Vice-Presidency of the United States on the Communist Party ticket was praised as a great honor to the Negro people, and the Communist Party was hailed as the only real fighter for Negro rights. I traveled more than 13,000 miles in 38 states; spoke at 50 great mass meetings organized by the Communist Party and at more than 20 gatherings of Negro leaders and people.

One of the features of the campaign was a national radio broadcast on "The Negro People and the 1936 Elections". Two thousand replies congratulating the Communist Party on its stand were received by the national campaign committee as a result of this broadcast. Several came from foreign countries—Canada, Scotland and one from a West Indian Negro in Peru, South America, etc.

In addition to this my campaign consisted of twenty-two local radio broadcasts. In all of these speechs the problems of the Negro people were raised as an integral part of the struggle of the entire American people. Some of these speeches were featured in the locality in which they were delivered. An outstanding meeting was one at Durham, N. C., which was preceded by a local radio broadcast that aroused the people of the community to the problems of the Negro in the South. A sentence or two

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from that speech may be worth repeating:

"As long as my people can be kept in a condition of slavery the whole toiling population of this part of the country, white and black, will continue to exist at the present frightful low level, or be driven lower. . . .

"We declare that terror against my people must stop. Mob rule must end. It can be ended by invoking heavy penalties against mob rule, against floggings and kidnappings. Lynching must be made a federal crime. The 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution must be enforced. Right here it must be stated that neither the Republican nor Democratic Party has attempted to enforce these amendments in the South."

Another angle was brought into the problem of the Negro people in a radio broadcast delivered at Los Angeles, California:

"In the film industry the most frightful discrimination is practiced against my people—the colored people. It is seldom that any Negro actor or actress is given a decent part. . . . Negro extras and even those who achieve some degree of acclaim as artists are compelled to perform in such a way as to foster the Hitler theory of 'white racial superiority'. . . .

"When we speak of equal rights for the Negro people we remember that in the film industry there must be a real drive to realize equal rights for the colored workers and artists. There must be a stop to this policy of forcing colored people to take parts that degrade their people and encourage the disgusting ideas of fascism."

Unite Political Power

The Communist Party thus foresaw all the issues that faced the Negro people in the elections. Our strategy also included the leading of the Negro people in an organized manner toward a movement for independent political action as the only sure means of effectively pooling their political power to realize their demands.

One outstanding example of this was support given to the building of the All-People's Party in Harlem, which brought together many diverse groups and organizations on the basis of a program of the people of that community in line with the general policies for a People's Front in this country.

The All-People's Party in its political campaign and in its organizational work was a great success. It was hailed by leaders of political opinion throughout the country. The All-People's Party in Harlem pooled altogether about 7,000 votes. This vote, together with the vote cast for the American Labor Party, the Communist and Socialist Parties, brought the total potential vote for independent political action, in Harlem, for a People's Front, a Farmer-Labor Party, to a grand total of approximately 20,000.

The Communist campaign in the State of Virginia was one of the outstanding political events in the South. Donald Burke, candidate for the Senate against Carter Glass, received 9,000 votes, and Ed Wright, Negro congressional candidate in Norfolk, received 500 votes; showing excellent possibilities for progressive political action which is bound to develop in the South.

The task that lies before the Negro people is to strengthen their forces organizationally, in the trade union movement, and particularly in the C.I.O. movement, in the unemployed field and in the movement for peace.

President Roosevelt promised many things during the election campaign.

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He underscored those promises by saying that "For all these things we have only just begun to fight".

The most immediate task before the Negro people is to develop a broad united front legislative program, to fight for this program in the next Congress of the United States. It must be a broad unity struggle. Only unity in mass struggle can bring results. This legislative program should be developed around the following issues:

Guarantee the Negro people complete equality in every phase of life; equal rights to jobs; equal pay for equal work; the right to organize, vote, serve on juries and hold public office. Abolish segregation and discrimination against Negroes. Establish heavy penalties against floggers, kidnappers, with the death penalty for lynchers. Enforcement of the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution. Support the bill advanced by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People against lynching.

As One Rises, All Rise

Already the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which has under way a movement for congressional support for anti-lynching legislation, and the splendid united front activities of the National Negro Congress give a real base for broadening and extending the movement for effective legislation in the next Congress in the interests of the colored people. In the State of California, Isaac Hawkins, a member of the Executive Committee of the National Negro Congress, was elected to the State Legislature.

"The spirit of the age—the voice of inspiration, the deep longings of the human soul, the conflict of right with wrong, the upward tendency of the oppressed throughout the world abound with evidence, complete and ample, of the final triumph of right over wrong, of freedom over slavery, equality over caste. To doubt this is to forget the great past, and blind our eyes to the present.

"It is more than a mere figure of speech to say, that we are—as a people—chained together. We are one people—one in common degradation, one in popular estimation. As one arises all most rise—as one falls, all must fall. Every one of us should be ashamed to consider himself free, while his brother is a slave. There should be no time too precious, no calling too holy, no place too sacred, to make room for this cause." (Frederick Douglass.)

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LENIN—THIRTEEN YEARS AFTER

BY A. MARKOFF

THIRTEEN years have elapsed since the great leader of the Russian working class, the genius of the great October Socialist Revolution, was snatched away from the workers of the world by an untimely death. On August 30, 1918, the treacherous hand of an assassin, Fanny Kaplan, member of the Socialist Revolutionary Party, sent a bullet into the body of Lenin, which finally snuffed out the life of the greatest leader, organizer, teacher and friend of the toiling masses the world over. V. I. Lenin died January 21, 1924.

The death of Lenin shocked the entire world. Tens, nay, hundreds of millions of people mourned their irreparable loss.

There were those to whom the death of Lenin meant a new ray of hope. The former exploiters and robbers of the Russian people, the former landlords, White Guard elements, former nobility, capitalist forces in other countries and class enemy agents in the Soviet Republic —they all rejoiced; they saw an early fall for the new workers' republic, a return to the rule of capitalists and landlords. The bourgeois press the world over predicted rapid disintegration within the ranks of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the breaking down of Soviet power.

Then there were many among workers, intellectuals, etc., who, while sympathizing with the young republic, lost heart at the death of Lenin, became pessimistic and had great fears as to the future of the Soviet Republic. The opposition within the Communist Party, led by Trotsky, was to many a sign of the beginning of disintegration of the forces of the revolution.

There was, however, a third group, a very large number of toilers in the Soviet Republic and masses of people in other countries who mourned deeply the immeasurable loss, but who understood that men like Lenin, men like Marx and Engels, do not disappear even after their death. Their life's work lives on and becomes a greater and greater force as their ideas, teachings become the property of the masses. These people understood the words inscribed on the banner of the Communist Party of the Soviet Republic: *Lenin is dead—Leninism lives.*

Five days after Lenin's death the Second Congress of Soviets was in session. On this day, January 26, 1924, Joseph Stalin, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Republic, delivered his famous speech on the "Heritage of Lenin". In his speech, Comrade Stalin took a number of vows. He, in the name of the toilers of the young Republic, vowed:

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1. To hold aloft and guard the purity of the great title of member of the Party.

2. To guard the unity of the Party.

3. To guard and strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat.

4. To strengthen with all his might the alliance between the workers and peasants.

5. To consolidate and expand the Union of Republics.

6. To strengthen the Red Army and Navy.

7. To strengthen and expand the union of the toilers of the whole world —the Communist International.

Thirteen years have gone by. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, under the leadership of the closest friend and best disciple of Lenin, our great and beloved Comrade Stalin, emerged as the strongest, most unified Party of the working class in the entire world; a Party enjoying the love and confidence of the 170,000,000 people of the U.S.S.R.

There appeared, from time to time, elements who tried to break the unity in the Party, who tried to create dissension, who organized oppositions within the Party ranks against the Leninist line of the building of socialism in the U.S.S.R.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, under the leadership of Stalin, directed a heavy blow against those who tried to interfere with the successful building and consolidating of the new victories of socialism. The Trotsky Opposition of 1923-24; the Trotsky-Zinoviev-Kamenev block of 1926—these have been successfully destroyed, eliminated from the Party ranks. The cleansing of the Party has eliminated many who came into its ranks with the purpose of disrupting the work.

The purity of the great title of member of the Party, the unity of the Party, have been guarded and strengthened. This vow has been fulfilled. *The banner of Leninism is held aloft by the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R.*

The Dictatorship of the Proletariat is Guarded and Strengthened

Thirteen years ago Comrade Stalin vowed to guard and strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat. Has this vow been fulfilled? The dictatorship of the proletariat has been guarded and has been strengthened manyfold. Today the dictatorship of the proletariat emerges as the broadest, all-inclusive democracy ever conceived by human society.

Whereas in the capitalist world democracy, wherever it still exists, is being curtailed; whereas in the fascist countries the people are denied the most elementary rights of citizenship—in the U.S.S.R. the new Stalinist Constitution emerges as the highest form of democracy, a democracy based on a socialist economy, without exploiting classes; a democracy based on social production and distribution.

"They talk about democracy. But what is democracy? Democracy in capitalist countries where there are antagonistic classes is in the last analysis democracy for the strong, democracy for the propertied minority. Democracy in the U.S.S.R., on the contrary, is democracy for all. But from this it follows that the principles of democracy are violated not by the draft of the new Constitution of the U.S.S.R. but by the bourgeois constitutions.

"That is why I think that the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. is the only thoroughly democratic constitution in the world.

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"And that is how matters stand with regard to the bourgeois criticism of the draft of the new Constitution of the U.S.S.R." *

The dictatorship of the proletariat, in the words of Comrade Stalin, is strengthened precisely because its base is broader, it has been transformed into a more flexible, hence more powerful system of state direction of society.

"If they interpret the expansion of the base of the dictatorship of the working class and the transformation of the dictatorship into a more flexible and consequently more powerful system of state guidance of society, not as a strengthening of the dictatorship of the working class, but as its weakening, or even its renunciation, then it is permissible to ask: 'Do these gentlemen know at all what the dictatorship of the working class is?'

"I must admit the draft of the new Constitution really does leave in force the regime of the dictatorship of the working class, and also leaves unchanged the present leading position of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R." **

To Strengthen the Alliance Between the Workers and Peasants

The U.S.S.R. has been transformed into one of the most highly developed industrial countries, based on the social ownership of the means of production. Industrialized agriculture on a collective basis has brought about a firm bond between workers and peasants. The difference between town and country is being obliterated; the new working class and the new peasantry emerge as common builders of socialism, builders of a happy life, a happy people, leading in the direction of communism.

The tremendous change in the U.S.S.R. that has taken place during the thirteen years since the death of Lenin is brilliantly expressed in the speech of Comrade Stalin at the special Eighth Congress of Soviets.

Changes in the U.S.S.R. from 1924 to 1936

"The Constitution Commission was to introduce changes into the Constitution operating at present, which was adopted in 1924, taking into account the changes in the life of the U.S.S.R. in the direction of socialism brought about in the period from 1924 to our days.

"What changes have occurred in the life of the U.S.S.R. during the period 1924-1936?

"That was the first period of the New Economic Policy, when Soviet power permitted a certain revival of capitalism, along with the general development of socialism, when it calculated that, in the process of competition between the two economic systems—the capitalist and the socialist—it would organize the superiority of the socialist system over the capitalist system.

"The task was, in the process of this competition, to consolidate the position of socialism, to attain the liquidation of the capitalist elements and consummate the victory of the socialist system as the basic system of national economy.

"At that time our industry presented an unenviable picture, especially heavy industry. True, it was recovering little by little, but it had not yet raised its output to anywhere near the pre-war level.

"It was based on the old, backward, scanty technique. It was developing, of course, in the direction of socialism. At that time the share of the socialist sector formed about 80 per cent of our industry. But still the sector of capitalism held at least 20 per cent of industry in its hands.

"Our agriculture presented a still more unenviable picture. It is true that the landlord class had already been done away with, but as compared to that class, the agricultural capitalist kulak class still formed a rather important force.

"Agriculture as a whole at that time resembled a boundless ocean of small individ-

* *Stalin on the New Soviet Constitution*, p. 23, International Publishers, New York.
** *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

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ual peasant farms with their backward medieval technique. There were in formation isolated points and little islands in this ocean, collective farms and state farms which, strictly speaking, were not yet of any really serious importance in our national economy.

"The collective farms and state farms were weak, while the kulaks were still in their strength. At that time we did not talk about the liquidation of kulaks, but of restricting them.

"The same thing can be said of the goods turnover of the country. The socialist sector of goods turnover amounted to some 50-60 per cent, no more, while all the rest was occupied by merchants, speculators and other *private traders.*

"Such was the picture of our economy in 1924.

"What have we in 1936?

"While previously we had the first period of the New Economic Policy, the beginning of the New Economic Policy, a certain revival of capitalism, today we have the end of the New Economic Policy, the period of the complete liquidation of capitalism in all spheres of national economy.

"Let us start from the fact that our industry during this period has grown into a gigantic force. Now it is no longer possible to call it weak and badly equipped technically. On the contrary, it is now based on new, rich and modern technique, with a strongly developed heavy industry and still more strongly developed machine-building industry.

"Most important is the fact that capitalism has been completely expelled from the sphere of our industry, and the socialist form of production is now the system which alone dominates the sphere of our industry.

"The fact that in volume of production our present socialist industry exceeds prewar industry more than seven-fold cannot be regarded as a trifle.

"In the sphere of agriculture, instead of an ocean of small individual peasant farms with weak technique and a preponderance of kulaks, we now have mechanized production conducted on the largest scale anywhere in the world, equipped with modern technique in the form of an all-embracing system of collective and state farms.

"Everyone knows the kulaks in agriculture have been liquidated and that the small individual peasant farm sector with its backward medieval technique now occupies an insignificant place. The share of individual farms in agriculture, as far as sown area is concerned, now comprises no more than two to three per cent.

"One cannot but note the fact that the collective farms now have at their disposal 316,000 tractors with a total of 5,700,000 horsepower, and, together with the state farms, they possess over 400,000 tractors with 7,580,000 horsepower.

"As for distribution throughout the country, the merchants and speculators are now completely expelled from this sphere. The whole field of distribution is now in the hands of the state, the cooperative societies and the collective farms.

"A new Soviet trade has come into being and it is a trade without speculators, a trade without capitalists.

"Thus the complete victory of the socialist system in all spheres of the national economy is now a fact. This means that exploitation of man by man is abolished—liquidated—while the socialist ownership of the implements and means of production is established as the unshakable basis of our Soviet society.

"As a result of all these changes in the national economy of the U.S.S.R., we have now a new socialist economy, knowing neither crises nor unemployment, neither poverty nor ruin, and giving to the citizens every possibility to live prosperous and cultured lives.

"Such, in the main, are the changes which took place in our economy during the period from 1924 to 1936." *

The banner of Lenin and Leninism is held aloft in the common bond between the workers and peasants of the U.S.S.R.

Under the skillful guidance of the genius of socialist construction, Comrade Stalin, the working class of the U.S.S.R., together with the toiling masses of the peasantry, carried

* *Ibid.*, pp. 3-6.

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through a most gigantic task of building socialism in the U.S.S.R.

Forces inimical to the interests of the success of socialism emerged every now and then in the Soviet Union; forces of destruction, of wrecking and sabotage have been employed by the class enemy. It was necessary to carry on an active struggle against those forces. Comrade Stalin, together with the most loyal members of the Communist Party, directed a severe blow to those coming from the "Left", the Trotskyites, Zinovievites, etc., on the one hand, and against those from the Right, on the other hand.

The developments in the U.S.S.R. have proven that Comrade Stalin, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the working masses of the U.S.S.R. who followed Comrade Stalin's leadership, who repudiated the opposition forces, have reached their goal, basing themselves on the true teachings of Marx, Engles and Lenin; using the teachings of the great leaders as a guide to action. Life has proven that the oppositionists, who, in the early periods of socialist construction tried to divert the Party and the people from the Leninist road, have now landed in the swamp of fascist murderers. Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev and others who, in the period of difficulties, capitulated to the class enemy, have joined hands with the worst, most barbaric sections of the class enemy, the Gestapo. The Trotsky-Zinoviev-Kamenev group are the excrement of the decaying bourgeoisie who temporarily found themselves within the ranks of the working class forces. And today, when we see men like Norman Thomas and others, in the name of democracy, in the name of free asylum for political refugees, take upon themselves the defense of an arch-assassin. Leon Trotsky, who engineered the foul murder of one of the most beloved leaders of the people of the Soviet Union, Sergei Mironovich Kirov; this assassin who sent his emissaries into the Soviet Union for the purpose of murdering Stalin, Voroshilov, Molotov and others, we must say to these men: You who call yourselves either Socialists or liberals, who in your speeches condemn violence, especially individual violence, individual terror, have now taken under your protective wing the organizer and plotter of the foul murders directed against the great leaders of the people of the U.S.S.R.

Norman Thomas professes sympathy and friendship for the Soviet Union. Actions, however, speak louder than words. The defense of Trotsky is not an expression of friendship for the U.S.S.R. It is the support of one who together with the worst enemy of the U.S.S.R., German fascism, plotted to cause destruction in the Soviet Union.

To Consolidate and Expand the Union of the Republics

Leninism lives today in the fraternal union of the many nationalities in the U.S.S.R. who, for the first time, in the long history of human development, enjoy freedom in every respect. The 160 to 170 nationalities inhabiting the territory of the U.S.S.R. who suffered most brutal oppression from the rule of the tsar and the landlords—these nationalities are united in a fraternal union, on an equal basis, enjoying full right to self-determination. This is the result of

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the correct application of the Leninist tactics to the solution of the national question.

Comrade Stalin in his speech at the Special Eighth Congress of Soviets discussed at length the present position of the many nationalities comprising the U.S.S.R.

"The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was formed, as is well known, in 1922 at the First Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R. It was formed on the principles of equality and free will of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. The Constitution now in force, adopted in 1924, is the first Constitution of the U.S.S.R.

"That was a period when the relations among the peoples had not yet been settled, as they should have been, when the survivals of mistrust towards the Russians had not yet disappeared, when the centrifugal forces still continued to operate. Under these conditions it was necessary to establish fraternal cooperation of peoples on the basis of economic, political and military mutual aid, uniting them in one union, a multi-national state.

"The Soviet power could not but see the difficulties of this. It had before it the unsuccessful experiments and unfortunate experience of multi-national states in bourgeois countries. It had before it the abortive experience of old Austria-Hungary. Nevertheless it decided to make the experiment of creating a multi-national state, for it knew that a multi-national state which came into being on the basis of socialism is bound to pass every possible test. Fourteen years have passed since then, a period sufficiently long to verify the experiment. What is the result?

"The period that has passed undoubtedly shows that the experiment in forming a multi-national state created on the basis of socialism has been entirely successful. This is an undoubted victory of Lenin's national policy.

"How is this victory to be explained?

"The very absence of the exploiting classes which are the principal organizers of strife among the nationalities, the absence of exploitation, breeding mutual distrust and fanning nationalist passions, the fact that the power is held by the working class, which is the enemy of all enslavement and the faithful bearer of ideas of internationalism, the materialization in reality of mutual aid of the peoples in all fields of economic and social life, and finally the high development of the national culture of the peoples of the U.S.S.R., culture that is national in form and socialist in content—as a result of all these and similar factors, the peoples of the U.S.S.R. have radically changed their characteristics. Their feeling of mutual distrust has disappeared. The feeling of mutual friendship has developed, and thus fraternal cooperation of the peoples has been established in the system of a single union state.

"As a result, we now have a fully formed multi-national socialist state, which has passed all tests and which has a stability which any national state in any part of the world may well envy.

"Such are the changes that have taken place during the past period in the sphere of relationships among the nationalities of the U.S.S.R. Such is the sum total of the changes in the sphere of economic and social-political life in the U.S.S.R. which have taken place in the period from 1924 to 1936." *

The banner of Lenin and Leninism is held aloft in the fraternal Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

To Strengthen the Red Army

The Red Army today in the U.S.S.R. is a formidable force that sends fear into the hearts of the imperialist enemies of the Soviet Union.

But the Red Army is an army for peace. The Soviet Union has played a most important role in promoting peace, in preventing a world slaughter thus far.

In the year of 1918, when the warring nations in the imperialist war continued the slaughter of hundreds of thousands on the battlefields, there was one voice which called for peace, for the cessation of war—that was the

* *Ibid.*, pp. 9-11.

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voice of Lenin, the voice of the Bolsheviks.

Lenin made every effort to get the warring powers to stop the war. When he failed to get a reply, he signed a separate peace pact with Germany. It was this peace pact which led quickly to the end of the war.

The Soviet Union since then has carried on a most consistent policy for peace. The Soviet Union is the greatest factor today influencing millions of people who do not want war. Through the non-aggression pacts, through the mutual assistance pacts signed by the U.S.S.R. with France and Czechoslovakia, through the proposal for complete and partial disarmament, by its participation in the League of Nations when the instigators of war—Germany, Italy and Japan—deserted the League of Nations, the U.S.S.R. has become the most important force which thus far has prevented the outbreak of a world slaughter.

The Red Army in the U.S.S.R holds aloft the banner of Lenin and Leninism.

To Strengthen and Expand the Communist International

The world Communist Party—the Communist International—came as the ultimate result of a long struggle carried on by Lenin against the opportunists in the Second International. The Communist International—the International Workingmen's Association of the twentieth century—is an expression of the class struggle of the proletariat in the period of monopoly capitalism, in the period of the general crisis of capitalism, in the period of wars and revolutions. Lenin created a fighting organ of the working class of the world and today, thirteen years after Lenin's death, the Communist International represents a world force embracing practically every country in the world.

Leninism lives in the struggles carried on by the Chinese workers and peasants against Japanese imperialism, for a free, independent China.

Leninism lives in the struggles of all oppressed nationalities against oppression, for national liberation.

Leninism lives in the heroic struggles of the Spanish people against the fascist forces of Spain and against the fascist intervention of Germany and Italy.

Leninism lives in the great People's Front in France which is mobilizing the forces of the people against reaction, against fascism.

The Communist International at its Seventh Congress adopted decisions which serve as a mobilization of all forces fighting against reaction, fascism and war.

The Communist International carries the banner of Lenin and Leninism into all parts of the world.

The Communist Party in each country carries on the struggle for a free and happy world.

The Communist Party of the U.S.A. is the living embodiment of the theory and practice of Leninism. The Party has demonstrated its correct understanding of the historic tasks facing the toilers of the U.S.A. in the present period. Following the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, the Communist Party of the U.S.A. developed a correct Leninist line in dealing with the forms of struggle in this period.

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The Ninth Convention of the Communist Party in June, 1936, reaffirmed the decision of the November, 1935, Plenum of the Central Committee, which says:

"The building of a Farmer-Labor Party at the present time is the most burning need of the working class of America, of the toiling farmers and of the middle classes. The building of such a party is the only way in which the working people of this country can seriously undertake to improve their intolerable conditions, to shift the burden of the crisis back to the shoulders of the rich, and to ward off the growing menace of capitalist reaction, fascism and war. It is the only way in which the working people can make an effective stand for their own interests in the national elections of 1936." *

And again in the concluding paragraph of the resolution of the Ninth Convention:

"These constitute the main tasks of the Party in the present period. It is the building of the united front of the working class and of the People's Front—the Farmer-Labor Party—as a coalition of the working class and its allies. *By getting hold of these tasks we shall build the impregnable resistance of the masses against the offensive of reaction and will create the prerequisites for the next and higher stage of struggle—the overthrow of capitalism and the building of socialism through Soviet power.* These are the great historic tasks confronting the Communist Party and every Communist in the United States. With boundless loyalty to our Party and to the great principles for which it stands, in the spirit of self-sacrifice and courage as taught us by Dimitroff—forward to struggle!" *

Leninism lives on, enriched by the experiences of the building of socialism in the U.S.S.R., enriched by the contributions of the great co-worker and continuer of the work of Lenin, Joseph Stalin. Leninism marches on to greater victories, towards a new world, a world of communism.

* Quoted in *Resolutions of the Ninth Convention of the Communist Party*, p. 27, Workers Library Publishers, New York.

* *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

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THE CRISIS IN THE SOCIALIST PARTY

BY WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

2. The Question of Cultivating the Revolutionary Forces

In the foregoing pages we have seen that the Socialist Party, with its new turn, has not succeeded in developing a policy that would bring it forward in a leading position among the workers and other toiling masses in their everyday struggle against the capitalist exploiters. Thus it still fails in the first essential for the establishment of the class struggle policy that is fundamentally necessary in order to build a strong revolutionary party. Now let us see what the Socialist Party is doing with regard to the second essential of such a class struggle policy —the building up of a strong body of Marxist-Leninist understanding in and around the Party. Here, again, as we shall see, our question will receive a negative answer: the Socialist Party is also not succeeding in this most basic need.

A. Reformist Theoretical Weakness

Prior to 1934, the authoritative pronouncement of the Socialist Party analysis and policy was the statement of principles adopted in the Party convention of 1924. This was a typical social reformist document of the period; it might well have been the basic program of any of the parties of the Second International. It was more conservative even than the 1920 statement (which was adopted under the influence of the Russian Revolution and the great post-war upheavals) and it contained all the theoretical misconceptions and opportunist policies that have led to the practical bankruptcy of the Second International in the face of the Russian Revolution on the one hand and the rise of fascism on the other.

The 1924 Socialist Party statement, a product of the Coolidge "boom" period, was not a program of proletarian revolution, but of the gradual growth of capitalism into socialism. The document rejects the Marxian analysis of the capitalist state as the instrument of the bourgeoisie and the revolutionary necessity for setting up the dictatorship of the proletariat—instead it is based upon the opportunist theory that the present state is a democratic people's state by means of which socialism can be built. The 1924 program also holds forth not a Marxian perspective of class struggle culminating in the overthrow of capitalism and the "expropriation of the expropriators" without compensation, but the Bernstein conception of class collaboration, the conquest of the state by peaceful means and the purchase of the major industries from the capitalist owners.

Concluded from last month's issue of *The Communist*.

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The Detroit, 1934, statement of principles, written as I have pointed out under the pressure of the great American strike wave of the early Roosevelt years and in face of the bankruptcy of the German Socialist Party before Hitler's attacks, broke sharply with the extreme Right reformist Socialist Party conception of 1924. The new program was still full of confusion and far from being revolutionary, but it was nevertheless a big advance over the previous document.

The 1934 program rejected the reformist theory of the capitalist "people's state", began to speak of the "bogus democracy of capitalism", and made a confused approach to the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat by vague theorizing about a future "workers' democracy". The program also cast grave doubts on the efficacy of purely democratic and legal methods of struggle and declared that it was prepared if necessary to "carry the revolutionary struggle into the camp of the enemy". It also took a more militant stand against war, pronouncing itself in favor of "massed war resistance", and it made a more correct estimate of the first socialist state, the U.S.S.R. This relatively Left program was adopted by the Detroit convention only after a fierce resistance by the "Old Guard" leadership, who denounced it as Communistic.

The Detroit, 1934, program represented progress in the direction of a revolutionary basis for the Socialist Party's work. But the Cleveland, 1936, Socialist Party convention took some steps backward by substantially watering down the Detroit document. Throughout its history the Socialist Party has opportunistically swayed back and forth in its statements of its basic principles, varying them widely according to the temporary moods of the masses. The Party was at the time no longer feeling the heavy mass pressure that it had experienced in 1934, so the 1936 Socialist Party convention, as always, dominated by lawyers, preachers, doctors and other middle class intellectuals, who were alarmed at their own radicalism of 1934, characteristically decided to remove some of the "objectionable" features of the 1934 program. They also hoped that this "concession" would placate the enraged "Old Guard" Right wing of the Party led by Louis Waldman, Abe Cahan, James Oneal, then on the verge of a split.

The Detroit convention had before it a proposed program submitted by the Left wing at the Socialist Call Institute, a document which, despite its many elementary theoretical errors, would have brought the Socialist Party substantially nearer to a correct Leninist position.* But the convention rejected this document and, instead of continuing the Party's progress Leftward, pushed it off again to the Right. The 1936 convention toned down the 1934 declaration of principles by modifying several key paragraphs in a manner considerably minimizing the necessity for a program of militant class struggle and placing more reliance upon bourgeois democracy. These retreats to the Right Norman Thomas calls an "improvement".**

In considering the status of the So-

* For a detailed analysis of this document and an estimate of the general theoretical position of the Socialist Party, see Alex Bittelman's pamphlet *Going Left*, Workers Library Publishers, New York.

** *After the New Deal—What?* p. 221.

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cialist Party with regard to revolutionary theory attention must be focused upon its leader, Norman Thomas. In reality, so great is his influence that the Party is guided far more by what he says than by its formal declaration of principles. And Thomas' whole theoretical line makes against a revolutionary program; it works directly counter to the development of a body of Marxian revolutionary understanding in and around the Socialist Party; it cultivates reformism and sectarianism and it creates favorable conditions for the growth of Trotskyism.

The viewpoint of Norman Thomas is a melange of "Left" liberalism and Bernstein revisionism, heavily tinctured with Trotskyism, and this incongruous mixture he calls "Socialism". Thomas, the present "Left" leader of the Socialist Party, is even less a Marxist than was the former Right opportunist Old Guard party head, Hillquit. Not only is the basic theoretical work of the great Marxists, Lenin and Stalin, rejected completely by Thomas, but he also blithely challenges offhand even the most fundamental principles of Marx and Engels. Thus, for example, in a few lines and with a wave of the hand, he casually brushes aside the Marxian conceptions of historical materialism and of the class struggle and also the Marxian theories of value.

"... these things do not prove that all this old world needs is to accept Marxism with its materialist conception of history, class conflict and theory of value."

"Not only is the concept of economic determination inadequate to the weight Marxists often put upon it but so is the more vehemently held dogma of the class struggle."*

* *America's Way Out*, pp. 133 and 138.

Thomas' latest book, *After the New Deal—What?*, is only a restatement of the traditional reformist line of the Socialist Party, with the addition of his new sectarian tendencies. It contradicts even the relatively mild "Left" line of the 1934 Party statement of principles. Thomas shows in it that the great lessons of the Russian Revolution, the rise of fascism and the bankruptcy of the opportunist line of the Second International, are quite lost upon him in the matter of working out a Socialist policy in the United States.

In Thomas' latest book we find a repetition of the old social reformist avoidance of mass class struggle and the customary opportunist conception of the gradual growth of capitalism into socialism. He even repeats the antique and discredited reformist plan of buying the industries from the capitalists, as he proposes "to offer some compensation to the expropriated owners".* Thomas retains a childlike faith in the efficacy of capitalist democracy as the means of accomplishing socialism. He completely disregards the lessons of fascism in Europe, which prove conclusively what Marx and Lenin said many years ago, that the capitalists, including the militant American brand, will never allow themselves to be ousted through the workers and their allies merely obtaining parliamentary majorities, but will resort to arms to defend their rulership. Thomas pins his hopes in the American capitalist democracy (with a bit of patching up here and there). He is thus an ardent advocate of American exceptionalism. Just how

* *After the New Deal—What?* p. 163.

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little a revolutionist Thomas is, despite all his pother about socialism, was shown by the revealing statement he made in June, 1936, to *The New York Times:*

> "In this country we want no dictatorship, we want no revolution. There are ample constitutional ways of bringing about the change [to socialism—W.Z.F.] in a peaceful and legal manner."

From all the foregoing it is clear that the Socialist Party, as a party, is not basing itself upon revolutionary theory; and as Lenin says, without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. With its present babel of conflicting group reformist theories—Old Guardism, militantism, Lovestoneism, and counter-revolutionary Trotskyism, the Socialist Party does not develop a program of militant daily mass struggle nor can it build up the indispensable core of revolutionary Marxian fighters. What progress it is making towards these essential goals comes from the pressure of the incipient Leninist-Stalinist minority in the Socialist Party. Especially does Thomas' mish-mash of opportunist theorizing stand in the way of the ideological advance of the Socialist Party. To become a revolutionary party the Socialist Party would have to overcome its shallow opportunist theories and base its policies firmly upon the study and propagation of the work of the great revolutionary leaders of the working class—Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

B. Hostility Against the United Front

A fundamental aspect of the failure of the new leadership of the Socialist Party to cultivate the revolutionary force of the working class is its hostility towards the united front. In this anti-united front attitude there are elements of the new Socialist Party sectarianism, but the main constituents of it are remnants of the traditional war of the opportunistic Socialist Party leadership against the Left wing.

The question of unity is now one of most burning necessity to the working class in view of the growing offensive of the fascist reaction. At its recent Seventh World Congress in Moscow the Communist International understood this clearly, saying: "At the present historical stage it is the main and immediate task of the international labor movement to establish the united front of the working class."

The Communist Parties all over the world are working actively to develop such unity of labor's forces. And that they are not striving in vain is demonstrated by the great united front movements in France, Spain, Austria, Italy, etc. In the first line, all these movements are based upon formal united front agreements between the Socialist and Communist Parties.

The need for unity within the ranks of labor is also acute in the United States, and the Communist Party is the leading fighter for the united front. As part of its campaign for an eventual broad united People's Front of labor and its allies in the Farmer-Labor Party it attaches great importance to a general united front with the Socialist Party, based upon a program of struggle for immediate demands, but also looking forward to the amalgamation of the two parties

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into one organization on the basis of a revolutionary fight for socialism.

Notwithstanding that the united front question played a big role in the recent defeat of the "Old Guard" leadership the present Socialist Party leaders, however, resist the striving of the Communist Party for a general united front. Thus they rejected the Communist Party proposal for a joint Socialist-Communist Party ticket in the 1936 national elections. Harking back to the traditional Socialist Party opportunist policy of war against the Left and conciliation towards the Right, they work on the theory that joint action with the Communists is a hindrance rather than an advantage. They only go as far in the direction of the united front as they are pressed by their proletarian rank and file among whom the Communist Party united front policy is very popular. The official Socialist Party stand is against a general united front with the Communist Party, but it does occasionally accept united front actions on individual issues.

On such questions as the Socialist Party and Communist Party have developed united front actions, including the amalgamation of the two unemployed organizations into the Workers Alliance, the defense of the Mooney, Scottsboro and Herndon cases, joint Socialist Party-Communist Party action in various unions, local mass demonstrations, etc., have been almost uniformly highly successful. The workers joyfully supported the unity in action of the two organizations, and the whole experience to date has gone to show that broad united front activities by the two parties on a sound program could be a powerful factor for progress in the labor movement.

But Norman Thomas, with eyes Right, wants little or none of that. In his latest book he says:

> "Our fundamental task is not to unite Socialists, Communists and what we call progressives, already numerous enough to stop fascism, in one anti-fascist bloc. All of us together are, alas, too few."*

With such characteristic confusionist arguments does Thomas justify his opportunist rejection of the united front and place obstacles in the way of labor's unity. In one breath he admits that the prospective united front forces are "already numerous enough to stop fascism" and then, in the very next breath, he bemoans that "All of us together are, alas, too few".

Negative results of this Socialist Party anti-unity line are to be seen in various united front movements, including the Farmer-Labor Party, the National Negro Congress, the National Youth Congress, and the American League Against War and Fascism. In these movements the Socialist Party policy (save in the case of individual Socialists who disregard their Party's line) boils down pretty much to one of mere fault-finding, sectarian proposals and even actual obstruction. The anti-united front tendencies in the Socialist Party are being strengthened by the growing influence of the counter-revolutionary Trotskyites.

Thomas, who is so conservative on the united front question in the United States, suddenly becomes super-radical on the united front internationally, which is only another way of opposing this policy. A la Trotsky,

* *After the New Deal—What?* p. 214.

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he is much alarmed that the Popular Front movements in France and Spain are not revolutionary enough and he criticizes them for Right opportunism. Thus, characteristically, at a big New York united front demonstration the Socialist Party, in the name of vague propo[illegible]s for a workers' Spain, not only [illegible] used specifically to endorse the [illegible]nish People's Front governmen[illegible] which was fighting guns in hand aga[illegible] fascism, but even tried to force the [illegible]mmunist Party to agree not to ca[illegible]slogans or make speeches bearing su[illegible] endorsements. But Thomas' narrow sectarian conception of the People's Front, if followed in Europe, could only have the effect of surrendering to the fascists the farmers and city middle class elements now in the Popular Front, for which decisive gift the fascists would rejoice. The Popular Front movement, despite its many weaknesses as yet in practice, is sound in principle. It is the correct revolutionary strategy in the given situation. It is the path by which the anti-fascist masses can develop basically the greatest possible struggle here and now, and it is also the strategical means by which the proletariat can gather around itself the maximum forces for the eventual revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system. It is giving new revolutionary hope, organization and fighting spirit to the masses demoralized by the ideological bankruptcy of the Second International.

The Socialist Party's openly opportunist resistance to the united front policy in the United States and its sectarian, but no less opportunist, attempt to narrow down the People's Front in Europe is a close relation of the "Old Guard's" anti-united front policy, and it is in line with that of the most reformist sections of the Second International. It demonstrates that the Socialist Party has not yet learned how to develop the revolutionary forces, its new leadership not having vanquished the reformist hangovers from the past in this fundamental respect. The anti-united front tendencies in the Socialist Party are a real barrier to its becoming a strong mass party and a leading fighting force.

C. Unfriendly Attitude Towards the Soviet Union

In a previous chapter I have shown that one of the most fatal mistakes in the whole history of the Socialist Party, one that undermined the Party from within and alienated the best revolutionary elements from without, was its years-long attitude of hostility towards the U.S.S.R. The bitter struggle that the Socialist Party "Old Guard" petty-bourgeois leaders so long led against the first socialist country was a basic expression of their general war against the Left wing in their own Party and against every other manifestation of revolutionary spirit and program.

The Socialist Party of today, despite its new turn, has not freed itself from this fundamental error. Such antagonism to the U.S.S.R. is, in final analysis, antagonism to proletarian revolution in general. Although its rank-and-file membership are distinctly friendly to the Soviet Union, there still remains much of the old reformist anti-Sovietism in the official policy of the Socialist Party. The *Socialist Call,* for example, has long been a

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happy hunting ground for renegades like Zam, the Trotskyites and various other professional slanderers of the U.S.S.R. Their lies are cut from the same cloth as those of Hearst and Green, but often outdo the latter in insidous misrepresentation.

Norman Thomas, the decisive leader of the Socialist Party, is especially to be criticized for his unfriendliness towards the Soviet Union. His attitude regarding the U.S.S.R. or "Russia", as he calls it in bourgeois fashion, is about 1 per cent grudging endorsement and 99 per cent cynical criticism. It is not to be expected, of course, that a reformist Socialist should accept uncritically the Soviet government and its program, but he certainly should appraise it fairly and honestly, and this Thomas does not do. The U.S.S.R. has always welcomed sincere criticism, an example of this being the warm greeting it gave to the recent splendid book by the Webbs, *Soviet Communism: A New Civilization?* which contains no little, honest but mistaken, criticism of the Soviet system.

Thomas approaches the question of the Soviet government from a biased, antagonistic standpoint. Its gigantic achievements politically, industrially, socially leave him cold and supercritical. He sneers at the warm and loyal defense Communists make of the first socialist country, the great world stronghold against fascism, when he says, "Russia is a kind of holy land to all Communists".* He has never taken the trouble to visit the U.S.S.R. (although thousands of Americans have done so) to study the situation at first hand. Whenever he writes about the Soviet Union Thomas reflects in his own special way whatever anti-Soviet slanders happen to be afloat at the time. Almost any liberal bourgeois writer can be depended upon to make a fairer and more objective estimate than he of the Soviet Union.

In these crucial days of threatening war danger, with the Soviet Union menaced from both east and west by strong and ruthless fascist powers, it is the duty and interest of every revolutionist to draw closer to the U.S.S.R. and to give the most active support to its peace policy. But Norman Thomas, typically, has not the slightest sense of any such need. On the contrary, he seems to consider that now, when the U.S.S.R. is so heavily attacked, is the best time to go sniping against it. His slanderous misrepresentation of the Soviet Union during the Ethiopian war was a scandal. His reception of the great new Soviet Constitution was frigid and skeptical—a new capitalist charter for New York City would evoke more enthusiasm and fairer consideration from him. His reaction to the case of the Trotsky-Zinoviev terrorists was to put the Soviet government, not these murderers, on trial. And so it goes on every Soviet question. Always Thomas is to be found casting doubts and insinuations upon the good faith of the Soviet government. He could gulp down without blinking the treacherous MacDonald and Hindenburg governments, but the revolutionary U.S.S.R. government can do nothing to suit him. And, as we have seen earlier, in his demand that "Russia" stand alone against its enemies and not call upon the workers of other countries

* *After the New Deal—What?* p. 211.

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for active assistance, he is threatening to abandon the Soviet government altogether in case of war.

The revolutionary stature of a party can be measured by its attitude towards the U.S.S.R. This is because the Soviet government is the revolution in life, the crystallization in flesh and blood of revolutionary theory and practice. The anti-Soviet tendencies in the leadership of the Socialist Party are expressions of the reformism with which the Party is afflicted. They are diluted "Old Guardism", remnants of the traditional opportunist war against the Left wing, and they are dangerously akin to Hearst's Soviet-phobia. They sum up as part of the Socialist Party's general failure to cultivate and organize the revolutionary forces.

It is high time that the Socialist Party put an end to these anti-revolutionary trends. They have done incalculable harm to the Socialist Party ever since the November, 1917, revolution and they still continue to work their evil effects. The Socialist Party can never be on a sound mass basis until its leaders stop sniping at the U.S.S.R.; it can never become a revolutionary party until it gives, as a Party, to the Soviet government and its struggle for peace that hearty support which springs spontaneously in all revolutionary parties and which wells up naturally in the heart of every revolutionary worker.

The Perspective of the Socialist Party

Now let us see to what general conclusions our analysis of the history and present situation of the Socialist Party has led us.

Firstly, we have seen in Chapter I that the basic reason why the Socialist Party has not succeeded historically in building itself into a strong mass revolutionary party is because it has followed a policy of reformism instead of one of Marxian class struggle. We have also seen that this opportunist line originated with the petty-bourgeois intellectuals who dominated the Socialist Party and systematically tried to make of it some kind of a semi-demi-progressive party. Then in Chapters II and III, we have seen concretely how the Socialist Party, in the thirty-odd years prior to the development of its new Left turn in 1934, had continuously violated both major essentials of the necessary class struggle policy: (a) by its failure to come forward militantly as the leader of the toiling masses in their daily economic and political struggles, and, (b) by its failure to build up a solid body of Marxian understanding in the Socialist Party and among its mass following. And we have also seen how, step by step, this persistent reformist policy prevented the Socialist Party from growing and gaining broad mass influence and how it finally led to several splits and to the deep decay which the Party suffered for ten years prior to 1934.

Now, in Chapter IV, we have just checked over the present general line and condition of the Socialist Party to learn whether, since its 1934 turn Leftwards, the Party has overcome the reformist errors of its past and has laid the basis for a sound Marxian policy of class struggle. And the conclusion we are compelled to arrive at is a negative one. The old disease of opportunism still afflicts the Socialist

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Party, although it has taken on some new sectarian forms.

To begin with, the present day Socialist Party has not succeeded in proletarianizing its leadership, although it has freed itself of many opportunist doctors, lawyers, professors, etc., in the "Old Guard" split. As since its beginning, the Socialist Party leadership remains in the hands of the petty-bourgeois intellectuals. And the general tendency of these officials goes to thwart the revolutionary purposes of the proletarians in the Party and to keep the Party on a reformist course, masked by revolutionary phrasemaking and Trotskyist counter-revolutionary maneuverings.

We have also seen in the present chapter how the present Socialist Party leadership still violates the two major essentials of the indispensable Marxian class struggle policy. Firstly, by its perpetuation of old reformist hang-overs and the introduction of the new sectarian opportunism, illustrated through its grossly wrong attitude on the question of the relation of the fight for immediate demands to the fight for socialism, its defeatist attitude in the struggle against fascism and war, its anti-Labor Party policy, etc., this leadership prevents the Socialist Party from coming forward in a leading role in the daily mass struggles of the workers and thus condemns the Party to isolation and impotence; and, secondly, by its gross neglect, revisionism, and antagonism towards the theoretical works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, by its hostility to the united front policy, by its consolidation with the discredited Trotskyite disrupters, and by its unfriendliness towards the Soviet Union, the Socialist Party leadership hinders the growth of the class conscious body of revolutionary fighters without whom the Socialist Party can never succeed.

The general consequence of this failure of the new Socialist Party leadership to correct the traditional and disastrous reformist line of the Party has been, instead of liquidating the Party crisis, to intensify it, especially during the past year. The Socialist Party is very sick from opportunism and Thomas' new "cure" is as bad as the old disease: indeed it is only the chronic ailment of reformism manifesting itself through new symptoms. The Socialist Party crisis spreads, deepens and becomes more threatening. The Party membership is rapidly declining, now being probably not more than half of the 19,121 that it was last year. The "Old Guard" split has wrought havoc with the Party organization in Ohio, Indiana, California, Washington, Oregon, New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, etc., and the Party is threatening to collapse in many other localities. The effects of the split are made worse by Thomas' silly sectarian policies and the anti-revolutionary work of the Trotskyist elements, all of which drive away many serious and honest workers. The Socialist Party is torn with factionalism, with half a dozen groups struggling for leadership; the Party is deeply confused theoretically; discipline is practically non-existent; pessimism is rampant, and there is a general falling away of members who are disgruntled and disgusted. Naturally also, the mass influence of the Socialist Party has rapidly waned; its 1936 election vote will be greatly reduced and, actually, in the trade unions, even those led by

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Socialists for many years, it has been almost wiped out.* In short, the Socialist Party is now, as the fruit of its long-continued opportunist policies, in a most serious crisis.

Now as to the future: Is the Socialist Party on the way to collapse, or has it within it the possibility of a renaissance and growth into a strong party of real value in developing the fighting force of the proletariat and its allies? To this query the only answer that can correctly be given at present is that both positive and negative factors are at work in shaping the Socialist Party and that the fate of the Party depends upon which of these forces becomes definitely dominant.

Among the positive factors—that is, those making for a strong and revolutionary Socialist Party—the most basic one is the constant pressure upon the Socialist Party from the radicalization of the masses of workers. Faced by the surging capitalist reaction which increasingly tends in the direction of fascism, these masses, harassed by unemployment, low wages, abridged civil rights, etc., are compelled to fight. Hence, they press militantly upon the trade unions, the growing Farmer-Labor Party, and all other labor organizations, in order to utilize these bodies as fighting weapons in their growing struggle against the capitalist exploiters. It was this mass pressure, in first line, that brought about the Leftward trend in the Socialist Party, with its defeat of the "Old Guard", adoption of the Detroit, 1934, declaration of principles, etc., and it is this force which, in opposition to the present trend of the Socialist Party leadership, provides the general basis for the defeat of sectarian reformism and Trotskyism in the Socialist Party.

Dovetailing with this constructive force are the effects, on the one hand, of the open bankruptcy of the reformist, class collaboration policy of the whole Second International in the face of rising fascism and, on the other hand, of the great successes, domestic and foreign, of the Socialist Soviet Union, the growth of the Popular Front movements in Spain, France, and the general united front policy of the Communist International—all of which developments tend to press the Socialist Party in the direction of a policy of Marxian class struggle.

Another major positive force making for a fighting Socialist Party is the revolutionary example and stimulation of the Communist Party. The C.P.U.S.A., manifestly has every reason to want the Socialist Party to develop in a revolutionary sense, for this means greatly to increase the power of both parties and to draw them closer together. Therefore, the Communist Party cooperates with the Socialist Party wherever possible, meanwhile making and receiving criticism in a friendly spirit. The Communist Party does what it can to strengthen the Leninist elements within the Socialist Party; it seizes upon every practical occasion to initiate joint united front campaigns of the two parties and other labor groups; its whole policy looks forward to the eventual amalgamation of the Communist Party and Socialist Party into one party upon

* A typical example: In the I.L.G.W.U. Local 22, New York, with 30,000 members, a traditionally Socialist Party controlled union, the Socialist Party anti-Labor Party policy was rejected by a vote in the ratio of 15 to 1.

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the basis of a Leninist revolutionary program.

But there are also at work powerful negative forces that check these constructive elements and tend to push the Socialist Party deeper into the quicksand of opportunism. Among these negative forces is the important fact that the Socialist Party has not succeeded in proletarianizing its leadership. At the Party's head, as of yore, stands a group of opportunist petty-bourgeois intellectuals. These elements act as a real barrier to the translation of the revolutionary moods of the Socialist Party's proletarian members into terms of a Marxist-Leninist policy for the Party.

Next there is the negative force of the traditional reformist line of the Socialist Party. The destructive opportunist policies which, as we have seen in detail, have through the course of the years brought the Socialist Party to the brink of ruin, still remains basically in effect. Their new sectarian trimmings by no means mitigate their disastrous consequences upon the Party.

And then there is that new malignant disease of the Socialist Party, the plague of Trotskyism. The admission of the counter-revolutionary Trotskyites was an injection of deadly poison into the life tissues of the Socialist Party. They are not only worsening every traditional weakness of the Party but are introducing a whole series of new difficulties for it.

Of these positive and negative forces, of which I have cited only those of a major character, it must be admitted that the negative ones are now in the ascendant. Corroding and destructive, they are rapidly isolating the Socialist Party from the masses and disintegrating its organization. It is certain that with its present leadership and policies the Socialist Party is on the way to impotence. Unless both are changed, unless the forces that produced the 1934 Left turn and overthrew the "Old Guard" can go forward to their necessary goal by giving the Socialist Party a revolutionary leadership and policy, the Socialist Party's days as an important factor in the labor movement are over. In their time both the Socialist Labor Party and the Industrial Workers of the World were militant organizations that played a progressive role in the developing revolutionary movement. But they failed to learn the lessons of the class struggle of their period and did not adapt themselves to the changing fighting needs of the workers. So they became isolated from the advancing masses and fell into decline and sectarian mummification. Is the Socialist Party doomed to travel the same fatal path?

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BOOK REVIEWS

WORLD POLITICS, 1918-1936. By R. Palme Dutt. International Publishers, New York, $2.00.

AMERICAN workers are beginning to learn that an understanding of world politics can no longer be reserved to the dilettante dabbling in "foreign affairs" by old ladies' societies interested in the diversion of the strange and bizarre. It has become an imperative necessity for class conscious workers beginning to know that not only is world peace indivisible but that the front line trenches of Spain's civil war are an integral part of their own fight here against reaction.

Especially in the United States, because of strongly inculcated false isolationist beliefs drummed into the heads of the American people by the Hearsts as well as by the more respectable press, world politics has heretofore been regarded as a scholastic subject for book-writing professors of international law.

With the knife of history sharply slicing up the world more or less into two main jagged parts, the United States could not escape unscatched, at least in its outlook on the towering questions of war and fascism.

That the first great act of the second Roosevelt administration, in point of departure from the elections, is an international event, the Inter-American Peace Conference, at Buenos Aires, is in keeping with the gravity of the times.

Still, the general view here of what was heretofore more academically known as "foreign affairs", but which R. Palme Dutt more accurately terms world politics, is that of a series of isolated, and most often sensational, events originating outside of the United States and concerning exclusively two or more foreign countries.

However, when what happens in Germany, Italy and Japan affects the future of the American people it no longer becomes "foreign" politics.

By pressure of the importance of the events, the American press is forced to pay more attention to world politics. Though it deliberately portrays world political events as segregated occurrences that serve, editorially, to contrast America's splendid and God-given isolation and to compare our happy aloofness from Hitler's bellowed threats, Mussolini's feverish war moves in the Mediterranean, or Japan's ceaseless preparation for further penetration into China or for invasion of the Soviet Union.

American readers searching for light on the subject owe R. Palme Dutt, author of *World Politics, 1918-1936,* an enthusiastic vote of thanks. He has saved them many a headache, many a long, fruitless wandering through the complicated maze of present-day world politics, which, if undeniably becoming more important, at the same time become more intricate and involved.

Comrade Dutt, editor of the influential British *Labour Monthly,* author of deserved international reputation, and leading English Marxist-Leninist theoretician and political writer, has presented us with his best book, the result of the best of his long scholarly work as a student, observer, and commentator of world politics.

World Politics is a lucid Marxist-Leninist examination of the fundamental laws and processes of world political history from the end of the last World War to the present, the eve of a threatening new world slaughter.

Some who have read the book describe it as a continuation of Lenin's *Imperialism* to date. While Comrade Dutt contributes greatly to an understanding of present-day imperialism, the book concerns itself mainly with the political developments rather than with a detailed examination of the economic substructure of imperialism and fascism.

After outlining the "New World Situation" eighteen years after the conclusion of the World War, the author, in his second chapter, states:

"The problem of world politics is the

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problem of collective world organization," adding, at the same time, that the "ever-sharpening and ceaselessly renewed conflict for the redivision of the world, by economic weapons, by state legislative weapons, by diplomatic weapons, and finally by armed warfare, which is in essence the reflection of the conflict of the enlarged world productive forces against the existing social and political forms, is the crux of world politics."

Thus the question is stated in its dialectical relationship: the growing conditions and striving for world organization occur precisely at the time when imperialism with its fascist spearhead drives forward in the sharpest manner for redivision, war and destruction.

The chapters on "The Balance Sheet of Two Decades" and "The Rising Antagonisms of Capitalist World Economy" are an examination of the post-war efforts of capitalism, struck down by the general crisis of imperialism, to rebuild itself by a hopeless tangle of conflicting measures.

Really to understand most of the questions raised by Hitler and Mussolini they must be traced back to their origin in the last World War and in the peace treaties which followed it. Dutt does the task as no bourgeois historian dared or could.

Entertaining and instructive reading is the genesis of the League of Nations as outlined in "Attempts at World Organization". Though we are taken back to the nebulous dreams of ancient philosophers who vaguely visioned some universal society, Dutt states:

"The conception of world unity and of ultimate world political unification arose for the first time from the conditions of capitalism; but it is in profound contradiction with the whole basis of capitalist organization, property relations, economic-political concentration of power and state forms."

The contradictory development of the League of Nations is traced here more completely and more originally than anywhere else to our knowledge. Dutt tells how it came to pass that through the sharpening of the contradictions of imperialism, the preparations for a new imperialist slaughter, the League, first fashioned as a weapon against the October Revolution in Russia, had developed to a condition where the Soviet Union was able to enter and use the League as an obstacle to impede the forward rush of the fascist and other warmongering powers most bent on plunging the world into a new slaughter.

Not only is the Soviet Union's entry into the League a wedge against the fascists, but the U.S.S.R. is able to utilize the contradictions between the small nations and the big powers, and between the imperialist rivals, in the interest of world peace.

For the best published treatment of such questions as "The League of Nations", "World Pacts and Regional Pacts", and the issue that will come more and more into the fore, "Collective Security", see Comrade Dutt's book.

It would be difficult to convey to the reader the richness of this book which in its 355 pages does not miss a single important event in the replete years of 1918-1936. How Dutt manages to crowd in his choice and numerous quotations from his vast fund of reading is amazing.

In our daily task as world politics columnist for the *Daily Worker,* Dutt's book has become invaluable for our practical work.

Most useful for understanding the immediate situation—the book was completed before the outbreak of the Spanish civil war—is the chapter on "Main Areas of Conflict". Besides its other merits of blue-printing the world's war-danger spots, it also contains the best outline of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (in a few pages) in the English language.

Dutt devotes his concluding chapters to the Soviet Union in world politics, the struggle for peace, and the future of world organization.

We have one criticism to make. The book seriously lacks portrayal of the revolutionary character of the present-day struggle for peace. The significance of this does not lie just in the striving to avert war, *per se,* but in advancing most rapidly the revolutionary interests of the proletariat and all humanity. This phase of the question is not the central feature in Palme Dutt's otherwise able description of the struggle for peace against the fascist warmongers.

War will be nearest when the inner crisis of fascism is greatest. By massing all forces desiring peace the fascists will find it difficult, and if sufficient resistance is aroused, impossible to go to war. Whatever degree of success is achieved in this direction will serve to raise the tension within the fascist coun-

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tries. If, nevertheless, the fascists should go to war, the preliminary struggle for peace will have created the forces to shorten the war and end it quickly with revolutionary consequences.

For those reasons Comrade Dimitroff has said that the struggle for peace is "a struggle for the victory of socialism throughout the world".

Dutt, for example, contents himself with saying: "The fight for peace is today the center of the fight against the main offensive of the dominant, most aggressive forces of finance capital", that is to say, a sort of defensive fight.

He enumerates the reasons for our peace struggle as follows: First, because a new world war would be an incalculable disaster for humanity; second, because every delay in the outbreak of world war increases the relative strength of the socialist forces throughout the world; and, finally, because the struggle for peace directly assists to mobilize the forces and prepare the ground for the further struggle against imperialism. The positive, revolutionary aspect is missing.

We are sure that readers of *The Communist*, if they browse once through Comrade Dutt's latest work, will make this volume, as we have, their No. 1 book on world politics.

HARRY GANNES.

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